JUNE 1963

Commentary

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AT THE BRINK OF A TEST BAN

JOHN MADDOX

It is now eighteen years since the first atomic bomb was exploded in the desert of New Mexico, and for nearly a third of that time three nations—the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union—have been negotiating at Geneva on a treaty to ban the testing of nuclear weapons. The first step in these protracted negotiations was the appointment of a committee of experts under the auspices of the United Nations which published a report in August 1958 confirming the then common belief that of all the conceivable measures of arms control, a treaty to ban nuclear tests would be the easiest to arrive at and to administer. Yet precisely the reverse has turned out to be true, for on a dozen occasions since that report was issued, the negotiations at Geneva have all but broken down, as one draft treaty after another—usually presented in a spirit of "take it or leave it"—has gone by the board.

Today, however, after five years, both sides have finally arrived at agreement on the principles upon which a test-ban treaty should be designed. They differ only in their notions of how frequently inspection teams should be allowed on each other's territory to look for evidence of nuclear explosions underground. Yet even this difference is insignificant, for the Western proposal of seven inspections a year and the Soviet proposal of three, offer virtually equal degrees of security from cheating on the one side and espionage on the other. That is to say, if the Western proposal is sufficient to deter the Soviet Union from clandestine tests—and this is what Western delegates at Geneva claim—the terms the Russians favor would serve the same purpose. If, on the other hand, the Russians are afraid of too great a breach in the supposedly impenetrable wall of secrecy surrounding the Soviet Union's military installations, it is most puzzling to know why they should have dared put forward their own latest proposals which, for the first time in three years, allow foreign inspectors access to Russian soil.

So thin, indeed, is the technical disagreement at Geneva that it has all the appearances of being a cloak for a general reluctance on the part of the governments of the United States and the Soviet Union to sign a test-ban treaty. (The British government makes no great secret of its willingness to sign anything that its partners in the long negotiations will agree upon.) Just as bridegrooms will hesitate on the brink of marriage, so the great powers seem to be trying to summon up the courage to solemnize something that has come to look inescapable.

Though the current disagreement at

JOHN MADDOX, a British scientist and science correspondent for the Manchester *Guardian,* is at present in New York, where he is an Affiliate at the Rockefeller Institute. Mr. Maddox is co-author (with Leonard Beaton) of *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons,* written for the Institute of Strategic Studies in London and published in this country last year by Praeger. This is his first appearance in COMMENTARY.

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Geneva is not based on a significant conflict of technical judgment, technical considerations are nevertheless still relevant to the questions that must now be decided —at least in the United States. It is plain that there will be no test-ban treaty unless the Senate's fears for American security can be overcome; and in the last few months—with the possibility of a treaty actually in sight—these fears have been played upon more intensively than at any time since the winter of 1959, when a group of scientists led by Dr. Edward Teller was busy picking holes in the first set of proposals to ban tests by international agreement.

To be sure, Mr. Kennedy is much more outspoken in his public advocacy of a treaty than Mr. Eisenhower was in 1959; with the test ban, as with the tax cut, Mr. Kennedy is, apparently, trying to drag a reluctant Congress along a well-marked highway. It is tempting, but it may also be legitimate, to suppose that the Russian government has analogous troubles, if only because there is now such bounteous evidence that a taste of modern military power is one of the most effective means of giving a group of men a pacific cast of mind. It is only natural that those without executive responsibility should be freer to indulge the fear that it is treaties which are dangerous.

THE principle that no test-ban agreement could ever provide an *absolute* guarantee that violations would be detected was clearly spelled out in the original report of the committee of experts, and with varying degrees of clarity it has informed the policies of all the governments involved ever since. Here, as with any international agreement, what really matters is that signatories should be offered a reasonably large chance of knowing when other parties have broken the rules. Throughout the negotiations, the United States has consistently pressed for a more stringent system of supervision than the Russians would accept; and it needs no great flight of speculation to link the Russian willingness to rest content with little or no inspection to the calculation that a good clipping service and a little conventional espionage would provide adequate information about the nuclear activities of the United States.

The report of the committee of experts also made it plain, so far as tests on the earth were concerned, that explosions underground would be the most difficult to detect from a distance. Techniques for detecting such explosions, which inevitably resembled techniques for recording earthquakes at distant places, were hurriedly sketched out on the basis of experimental information about a single underground explosion that seems to have misled the committee into over-optimism of a minor kind. The first draft of a treaty outlined by the committee would have strung out 180 seismic stations on the surface of the earth, roughly a score of them in the Soviet Union and an equal number in the United States. Almost as an afterthought the committee noted that it would be necessary to reinforce this network of detection posts by inspecting the sites of suspicious disturbances of the earth's crust so as to make quite certain that these were earthquakes and not underground explosions.

At the outset the Russians insisted the committee's report should be regarded as the technical basis for a treaty, and that the diplomats should be concerned only with its implementation. Soon, however, fresh experimental evidence collected by the U. S. Atomic Energy Commission forced an *ad hoc* group called the Berkner Committee on Seismic Improvement to the conclusion that 180 seismic stations would not be as efficient as had been supposed. The same committee made far-reaching recommendations as to how still more efficient networks of seismic equipment could be designed.

Picking holes in the system of detection, and suggesting means for its improvement, have been energetic pursuits ever since the

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beginning of 1959. For a long time the tide ran with those who argued that tests could be concealed by exploding the bombs in underground caverns or far away from the earth, in outer space. This school of thought had its most striking successes in the summer of 1960, when President Eisenhower announced that he was reserving his right to break the moratorium on testing then in effect, and when he also set a vast program of seismic research into motion. Eventually, of course, it was the Russians and not the Americans who broke the moratorium first, but at the same time the benefits of the American research program began to flow in. Not merely were more sensitive detecting instruments developed, but a great deal was learned about earthquakes that might be mistaken for nuclear explosions. And in addition, the possibilities of exploding bombs in caverns or in outer space were recognized to be more theoretical than real.

As a consequence of all this, American negotiators in the last two years have been able to propose progressively simpler networks of detection posts, even up to the point of yielding on the need for people to operate equipment inside the Soviet Union—which is just as well, considering that the Russians have repudiated all proposals on this issue ever since the meeting between Mr. Eisenhower and Mr. Khrushchev in May 1960. Whereas in 1958 the United States held that every suspicious event should be investigated by inspectors, the American draft treaty of August 1961 asked for between twelve and twenty on-site inspections per year. By now that figure has been reduced to seven. At the beginning of this year, the Russians once again (after three years' hostility to the idea) agreed that some on-site inspection should be embodied in the treaty, but have refused to go above three a year.

The insignificance of this difference is plainly evident. Accurate records—now for the first time available—show that in the Soviet Union each year there are likely to be 170 natural earthquakes corresponding in size to underground explosions with a yield equivalent to a tenth of that of the bomb dropped on Nagasaki. The same records show that it would be possible to place arrays of seismic equipment around the periphery of the Soviet Union so as to identify 140 of these events for the innocuous things they are. The result is that a mere thirty events recorded on the seismometers would come under suspicion. The Western proposal to inspect seven of them every year means that on the average one out of every 4.3 small earthquakes would be investigated to see if it might have been a nuclear explosion. But in 1960, when the West asked for twenty annual inspections of the Soviet Union, Western negotiators thought there would be seventy suspicious earthquakes in a year, or more than twice as many as are now expected. The 1960 proposals corresponded to the inspection of one in every 3.5 small earthquakes. Thus, though the number of inspections is smaller than in any previous proposal by the West, there has been no substantial change in the proportion of earthquakes open to inspection.

These facts, which are not themselves in dispute, give the lie to those who, like Dr. Teller, insist that an agreement to ban tests along the lines now proposed by the West in Geneva would be "virtually unpoliced." To explode a bomb underground very much larger than a tenth of the size of the one dropped on Nagasaki would be to court detection. Even to let off an explosion corresponding in power only to 2,000 tons of conventional explosives would involve a risk of being caught once on every four occasions. And mounting a series of five tests, even if at different locations so as to make the sequence less conspicuous, would entail a two-in-three risk of being caught.

Another line of attack on the current Western proposals at Geneva has been led by Representative Craig Hosmer of Cali-

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fornia, who is a senior though somewhat unreflective member of the Congressional Joint Committee on Atomic Energy and also Chairman of a body known as the Committee on Nuclear Testing of the Republican Conference. Since the beginning of the year Mr. Hosmer has produced three reports critical of the administration's policy at Geneva, has written once to President Kennedy, and several times to various newspapers. And in the Upper House, Senator Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut has lent bi-partisan support. The most direct challenge to have emerged from this activity is the assertion that the proposed system for detecting tests by ringing the borders of the Soviet Union with seismometers would leave a "big hole" in Central Russia, where the Soviet Union could (at least in suitable kinds of bedrock) carry out small underground tests without fear of being caught. Representative Hosmer claims to have gleaned all this at the hearings held at the beginning of March by the Joint Committee of which he is a member. His inferences, however, have been flatly contradicted by senior officials of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, and appear to be without foundation—based as they are on the misconception that seismic-detecting instruments are ineffectual at distances of more than 650 miles from the point of an underground explosion.

IRONICALLY, the vigor of the attempts by agencies of the administration to defend the treaty now proposed by the West at Geneva cannot fail to display as meaningless the difference between the West and the Soviet Union on the number of on-site inspections. If, for example, the American proposals would ensure a two-in-three chance of detecting a series of five small underground explosions, the Russian proposal that there should be only three inspections every year would entail two chances out of five that a series of five tests would be detected. The difference between these ratios is clearly not big enough to influence the policies of nations in any important way. Thus there is no technical reason why East and West should not quickly agree on some simple compromise (if necessary as crude as that of splitting the difference between three and seven), and then as quickly have the ambassadors sign on the dotted lines. That both sides continue to insist on the technical nature of their dispute is an intolerably devious attempt to obscure the issues at large with a bit of "science." But if technical difficulties no longer stand in the way, what then is the trouble? May it be that military considerations are behind the evident reluctance of the two parties to conclude a treaty?

This, too, seems unlikely. In the tests carried out last year, both nations must have gathered enough information to equip all the missiles now in service or on the drawing boards with efficient warheads. The Russians almost certainly have the design of extremely powerful warheads for the very large rockets which their generals appear to favor, while the United States must be well supplied with designs of warheads for the smaller missiles making up the Western strategic deterrent. Both nations must also have learned by their tests that the improvement of warheads has reached a point of diminishing returns for the investment of scientific effort. In the immediate future, greater military benefits will probably come from improving the accuracy of bombardment missiles. As for entirely "clean" thermonuclear weapons and radically new anti-missile devices, they are still some years away. Both parties must have learned, moreover, that underground explosions are a painfully slow means of making progress with the design of weapons (as Dean Rusk told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on March 11). Evidently it would not be a great military disaster for the United States, at least for the next few years, if Mr. Hosmer were right in his gloomy estimate of how ineffectual is the proposed supervisory

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system, and if the Russians were to explode a few weapons underground without being found out. Some advances might be won in this way, but they could not be significant, let alone decisive.

In his statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Mr. Rusk provided a wry comment on these calculations of relative military advantage. "Our military position," he remarked, "might well be more secure today if we had successfully achieved agreement on a test-ban treaty several years ago, earlier in the negotiations." His point was that the progress in military equipment in the last five years had only seen to it that both super-powers were evenly matched at a higher rung of the ladder of destructiveness. And the Secretary of State went on to say that the administration considered it "doubtful that either side would, through further testing, achieve major advances in any significant area which could be translated into a military advantage without the other side making a similar or offsetting gain."

THERE REMAINS, then, the question of why the test-ban treaty remains unsigned. It is tempting to think that the delay may only be fleeting, just long enough to upset the positions held by the Mr. Hosmers of this world; but that would be too optimistic. For overshadowing the issue of when a treaty is to be concluded is the more daunting question of what it can be expected to accomplish. Here the outlook is confused, for the prospect of a test ban is all things to all men.

The days have long since gone when the major powers at Geneva could virtually promise the accession of France and China to any treaty that might be signed. France is already a member of the nuclear club, and even before de Gaulle's disaffection toward NATO became overt, he had consistently foresworn adherence to any treaty that did not bind the two great powers to give up all further production of nuclear explosives. It would be folly now to expect French accession, and the outlook for China is equally gloomy. Though China (like France) cannot become a significant counter in the world's balance of power at least until the end of this decade, the Chinese determination to make bombs has been openly and often declared.

So it is that President Kennedy's frequently repeated, and entirely earnest, statement that a test ban would help in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons must be interpreted as carrying more psychological than predictive weight. To be sure, some countries that have never thought of making bombs would probably accede, and others would be dissuaded, more or less effectively, from carrying forward plans to smooth the path for a decision to make bombs. But some nations, among which India is the most prominent example, might consider their interests so closely threatened by the emergence of China as a nuclear power that they would decline to be restrained by a test-ban treaty without some external (and acceptable) guarantee of nuclear defense.

To the extent that a test ban is only a partial restraint on the will of fifth, sixth, and seventh nations to join the nuclear club, the major powers are discouraged from signing. For it has been common ground, all through the last five years, that the testing of weapons by any nation, signatory or not, would automatically confer a right to abrogate the treaty on any nation wishing to do so. It is understandable that both major powers should be uneasy about committing themselves to a treaty, with all its complex provisions for supervision and inspection, only to see it abandoned within a year or so. Unexpectedly, it is as if the major powers find themselves united by their suspicion of what smaller powers may do next.

This difficulty might perhaps best be resolved by turning the test ban into a foundation for more comprehensive agreements—an idea which has always been

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implicit in the negotiations at Geneva anyhow. Indeed, the point may have been reached at which the test ban can only come into effect if it is linked with some tangible promise that arms-control measures tending still further to limit the risks of nuclear war will follow closely upon it. There is the possibility of an agreement not to help other countries to become nuclear powers; not to test ballistic missiles; not to site nuclear weapons in specified parts of the world; not to manufacture nuclear explosives (which would entail tricky political issues of inspection). Any or all of these measures (as well as an agreement to reduce stockpiles) might well serve as a spur to the signing of a test-ban treaty. So there is a strong case for asking that questions like these should be taken up urgently, either by the three negotiating parties or by the seventeen-nation conference of the U. N., also meeting at Geneva.

FINALLY there is the matter of public relations. By exaggerating the technical differences that separate them at Geneva, the principal governments only provide their opponents at home with ammunition. There is some evidence that the Russian government was persuaded only with the greatest difficulty to agree to three on-site inspections every year, and that it is now sulking because this dramatic change of policy did not win American approval. It may also be that the Americans have stuck with the figure of seven because, while it is easy to silence the opposition of people like Mr. Hosmer on intellectual grounds, it is not so easy to still the widespread distrust in the United States of any agreement with the Russians.

Historically, however, these are empty postures. People want a test ban, and it would do some good. Even if it did not turn out to be a panacea, it would remove the cruellest edge from the universal anxiety over nuclear war, and it could well lead to more far-reaching agreements with some real promise of security. It is fashionable to say that so long as they are talking at Geneva, good works are being done, but this too is beginning to sound hollow. Like the shepherd boy who cried "wolf!" too many times, the negotiators at Geneva have been on the verge of agreement so often that the joke has begun to pall. At his news conference last month, President Kennedy used a different image when he said: "If we don't get [a treaty] now . . . perhaps the genie is out of the bottle and we'll never get it back in again." This may be an oversimplification, for in one sense, of course, the genie has been out for eighteen years, and the test ban alone will not get it back. But without the test ban, the genie will never be put back. So much is now certain.

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ALFRED CHESTER

SALINGER: HOW TO LOVE WITHOUT LOVE

SINCE I LIVED in outermost Paris during practically the whole of the 1950's, I was very late in learning of what seems to have been one of the chief American diversions during that decade: J. D. Salinger's Glass family. As matters appear to stand right now, I could, without stretching things too much, say that I didn't learn about the Glasses until they had not only ceased to be a diversion but had evidently ceased to be at all. First news of them reached me in a letter from a Jewish girl I'd known in New York, who, oddly, or not so oddly, enough, later married an Irish-American. Apropos of nothing I can especially remember, she asked: "Aren't you crazy for the Glass family? I am, especially for Seymour." It didn't occur to me that this had anything to do with Salinger—though I had some years earlier read "A Perfect Day for Bananafish"—and it was a year before I found out who the Glasses were.

I found out when I came to New York, where, needless to say, almost everyone was crazy for the Glass family and seemed to be on intimate terms with them. It made me feel very left out of things indeed, like the only man in town who hadn't been invited to a party. When I finally got around to crashing, I could hardly believe I'd come to the right place, for I never succeeded in finding those marvelous and celebrated people who'd been talked about so heatedly in living rooms and magazines. If "Franny," "Seymour," "Zooey," and "Raise High the Roof Beam, Carpenters" are really the right and only stories about the Glasses that appeared during the 50's, then the reason I couldn't find them is that they weren't there. They did not, in the simplest and most usual sense of the phrase, ever come alive, and I suspect that the reasons they did for so many readers were largely external. There was first of all the reservoir of love built by Salinger with *The Catcher in the Rye;* there was the very contemporary New York type family itself—Jewish and Irish and Central Park and middle class—given flattering depth with a lot of religious paraphernalia; there was the family chronicling (rather in the form of a writer's notes for a contemplated novel) that more and more pervaded each piece; and there was also the reader's confidence that, since the stories were beginning to read like serial installments, if lifelikeness didn't actually obtain among the Glasses, it would surely one day come—providing cancer, the atom bomb, or old age didn't get there first. Life would arrive soon or Soon. Salinger could be trusted. Who else, since the war, had created such a host of lifelike and memorable characters?

The genius or, if you will, ingenuity, of Salinger's earlier work lay not in his creation of individuals, but in his depiction of

ALFRED CHESTER's literary essays and reviews have appeared frequently in these pages. A collection of his short stories, *Behold Goliath,* will be published by Random House.

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types. Nearly everyone in his stories and in his novel rang bells like mad. You could not have learned to know thyself better from reading his work, but you might have recognized some of your sillier traits, and you would definitely have recognized the people and the things around you in it. He was always putting his finger on just the right gesture, on the precise tone of voice, on the exact object or circumstance. And if one suspected that he was in scorn of the vanities and trivialities of the milieu he described, he made them nevertheless glamorous, or rather he did not subtract from metropolitan life any of its mythical and publicized glamor. From *The Catcher* one came away charmed by the very things that appalled Holden: the night club, the theater, the pretentious sophisticates, the stupid office girls, the prep school, everything. It was all so precisely depicted that it gave one the pleasure of the miniature. You couldn't possibly be offended by it—even if you happened to be a stupid and pretentious nightclub. *The Catcher* is, so far as I know, an unparalleled example of a writer's having the best of both worlds, of getting both God and Mammon to work for him wholeheartedly. (I'm not trying to diminish the value of *The Catcher* which—though both it and I have grown twelve years staler—is still one of the freshest novels this country has produced since the war.) The life in *The Catcher,* like the life in some of the *Nine Stories*—since whose appearance I have grown ten years staler, while they have grown a generation staler—springs from the swift, immediate, authentic response of the characters to the world around them. And the intense charm of the books came from the fact that his characters were responding to *our* world which also happened to be theirs. Their world will go as soon as our world goes (and then, of course, the charm will disappear, as it already has from Esmé, from Teddy, from most of them) because it was never transmuted; it was merely depicted. What once was the most moving scene in *The Catcher*—when Holden tries to explain his anguish over American civilization to the absurd girl he's with at Rockefeller Center—has now become flat and insufficient. The time for disgust over Cadillacs has passed and Holden's suffering does not seem interesting or real enough, enough *itself,* to make us separate it from its object, thereby turning the object into symbol and the suffering into our own. All his lament makes us want to do is prod him gently, wake him up, and say: nobody cares about Cadillacs any more.

THAT Salinger's feelings did not run very deep in his early work is ultimately why what he hated could charm us and why, when the object of his feelings was made trivial by time, so were his feelings. Of all Salinger's characters the one with the most staying power has proved to be Muriel Glass, Seymour the Suicide's wife in "A Perfect Day for Bananafish." It is still utterly delightful to see her polishing her nails and waving her hands around to dry the stuff, to listen to the inane things she says on the telephone, to watch her cross and uncross her legs, touch an ashtray, handle a cigarette, move the receiver. There is no doubt she never ceases to be a type, but it is Salinger's problem, not ours, if we cannot see so lively and physical a type as a good reason for Seymour's suicide. But Salinger, I suppose, wants us to think backward: if Seymour killed himself, he must have done it because—and the only because in the story is Muriel. So then we have to hate Muriel. It's rather like the traditional Hollywood technique of letting the audience know how to feel about a situation by showing how an on-the-scene observer reacts to it.

In "Bananafish," as in that Rockefeller Center scene from *The Catcher,* Salinger uses a device that he repeats elaborately and at great length in two of the Glass stories. It appears to be a simple contrasting: Seymour against Muriel, Holden against the girl, the individual against the

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type, intelligence against stupidity, real feeling against no feeling, what Salinger loves against what Salinger hates. The usual idea of contrast is to intensify white by putting it against black, and vice versa. But Salinger doesn't play the game quite straight in "Bananafish," for what he does is try to make us imagine white by putting void against black. As it happens, his trick backfires because the reader falls in love with Muriel the black, and Salinger is left holding an Act of Depth in search of a character. And Seymour? What is Seymour? Who is he? He is no one; he's just an idea.

SO FAR AS I know, no new story by Salinger appeared during the four years preceding 1955 when both "Franny" and "Raise High" were published in the *New Yorker*. I am convinced that those four silent years were spent by him on the road to Satori and in deepest spiritual anguish. How far along he got, and why he returned, seem like matters that shouldn't be speculated about in public; yet since he obtrudes himself and his own spiritual interests with ever-lessening embarrassment into the Glass pieces, and since it is impossible to understand his stories without gauging the status of Salinger's soul, I'll tell you what I have measured from his work. There is an often quoted Zen saying which goes something like this: "When you are unenlightened, mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers. When you are approaching Enlightenment, mountains are not mountains and rivers are not rivers. When you have attained Enlightenment, mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers." Well, I think Salinger got stuck about midway, where mountains and rivers aren't mountains and rivers. He went far enough along to undo himself and then stopped, or was stopped, cold, or perhaps hot, or perhaps, as he might put it, hot and cold. And he started talking. (If he sometimes talks as Americans often seem to talk when they are having at you from Satori Boulevard—whether they've been traveling via Zen, Gurdjieff, mescalin, LSD or whatever—as if he were a public relations man for the Godhead, it would nonetheless be diabolical, not to say asinine, to attack him for the product he represents rather than for his manner of pushing it.)

Why did he not go on? Because he couldn't, and you can often hear the wheels of his spirit spinning in the sand where they got caught. But qualities and textures, gestures and surfaces, the stuff of his early writings, were completely undone, peeled open; and Salinger fell to a level of feeling so deep, so complex, that his relationship to life no longer had any relevance to Cadillacs, nail polish, leg crossings, telephones, regional speech patterns, or American civilization. (With respect to the Zen quotation, one might also say: his relationship to life did not *as yet* have relevance to nail polish, etc.) But neither did it have relevance to Satori. Like Dante, he was chronologically *nel mezzo del camin'*, and like Dante he was in *la selva oscura*. Dante, of course, didn't talk about it for a long time; he waited, my ignorant memory tries to recollect, between ten and twenty years. But Salinger was impulsive, and he chose, or was driven, to speak not only of the sands in which he was still stuck but of the starting place, which no longer meant anything to him, and of the destination, which he could not even imagine. Not having arrived at his destination, he had not become the agent of prophetic statements (except insofar as he publicizes, through marvelous quotations, the statements of others), and among the resources of his humanity there had never been, as there had been for Dante, a great poetic imagination and an already formulated religious design to tell him what the second half of the road was like. Dante need have gotten no closer to Paradise than Salinger has to Satori for the *Comedy* to have found its way. Whatever the literal background of his honeymoons with Virgil and Beatrice, in his art *he* was leading *them;* he knew ex-

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actly where to go and what salvation looked like. The Church and his own medieval genius told him, and they told him in sensual, communicable images.

I would guess that Salinger's Glass stories are, or were intended to be, a religious allegory, with the seven Glass brothers and sisters representing the various stages toward Enlightenment, from Franny, the youngest, who is just entering the crisis, to Seymour, the oldest, who has made it, who is *there,* whose Bananafish suicide we are now told to see as his means of shooting himself out of this world—dying to life, as the expression goes—and into Satori. I would also guess that the allegory idea didn't come to Salinger until after "Franny" (which is the first, best, most tender of the later pieces), and that since it posits Seymour as the Enlightenment, the project was doomed from the start, for Seymour's enlightenment, which merits no capital "E," is a kind of cherry-flavored innocence, much inferior to Holden Caulfield's dream of catching children in the rye. Seymour is the captain of the God-ship lollipop.

For the form of "Franny," Salinger revisits "Bananafish" and Rockefeller Center. He sets up Franny and Lane Coutell as his White Queen and Black King, and it works beautifully. It works because, while Salinger thinks he is up to his old trick of materializing White by holding nothing up to Black, the emotion that is Franny is a real one, deeply felt. She *is* White. And what facility Salinger has lost in his dealings with the surfaces of things seems to be a gain, for it limits him, when talking of Franny the character (as opposed to Franny the Anguish), to flat unobtrusive descriptions:

> Franny saw [Lane's arm waving], and him, and waved extravagantly back. . . . She was wearing a sheared raccoon coat. . . . She threw her arms around him and kissed him. It was a station-platform kiss—spontaneous enough to begin with, but rather inhibited in the follow-through. . . . "Did you get my letter?" she asked, and added, almost in the same breath, "You look almost frozen, you poor man. Why didn't you wait inside?"

Just enough to get her on the page, to embody the emotion. The anguish of her crisis is all the rest of her, and it is so intense and so convincing that it doesn't matter a bit that she is appalled by virtually the same things that appalled Holden—the phonies and the activities of their world.

Even the Black King is improved by the depth of the new Salinger. It has been observed that Salinger is "unfair" in his treatment of Lane Coutell, that he trims from the boy everything that might reveal him as something more than a snob, a prig, a creature of fashion. This of course is a wicked way to write in our democratic and liberal present, but when that observation has been made, we can also observe that Salinger has never been able to do so wicked a thing before. His contempt for Lane comes through very clearly, as it never did with any of his early characters. Salinger ridicules him. He ridicules Lane not only for his vanity but for his humanity. He makes Lane's hunger ludicrous by having him gnaw at his meal while Franny is practically swooning with her suffering (and of course unable to touch the food on her plate); he makes Lane's love ludicrous by having him remember "that once, in a borrowed car, after kissing Franny for a half hour or so, he had kissed her coat lapel, as though it were a perfectly desirable, organic extension of the person itself." And because Salinger is honest and open—and without charm—in his hatred of Lane, his little game of setting his character up as a human being so that he can bowl him over with ridicule for being one makes Lane his single complete creation. At the end, having purged himself of his violent feelings, Salinger has a moment of tenderness toward Lane, gives up whipping him, and allows the boy to show himself as genuinely concerned and worried about Franny.

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HEAVEN ONLY KNOWS what happened to Salinger during those months between "Franny" and "Raise High," a story that is fake from the word go. Salinger once again uses the "Bananafish" device of Black and White, but in a quite different way. There are a whole bunch of Blacks this time (pretentious guests from the bride's side at Seymour's wedding) who take up all but a score or so of the hundred-odd pages; and the White is just a few pages of excerpts from Seymour's diary. (Seymour never appears; in fact he never ever makes an in-person appearance in these stories; and I think, if they continue, he never will; I think Buddy is his body, his worldly incarnation.) Shuttling between the Blacks and the White goes the narrator, Buddy the Body, second son of the Glasses, and though he is apparently very loyal to his older brother, he and Salinger make the mistake of printing verbatim the writings of Seymour the Soul. And what a mistake. All those "how sweets" and "so beautifuls" and "unbearably happys" and "overwhelmingly gratefuls" make a farce of Satori. Salinger has gotten out of his depth in his intentions and resorted to the fakest and most trivial kind of hagiography. Seymour is nothing but a mixture of cold blood and confectioner's sugar.

To compensate, Salinger makes his Blacks blacker than ever and more pretentious than ever. Seymour should look real by comparison, but he doesn't because the Blacks are stripped so entirely of virtues that they become merely grotesque, not Black. There is an unfortunate internal explosion as a result of all the shenanigans, and Salinger's malice, rather than the Blacks, becomes contrasted with Seymour. What is "human-size," however petty or vain, is beautiful to Seymour, but if Seymour is Salinger's conception of Enlightenment, then by his mistreatment of his characters, Salinger places himself in a pretty backward position. Another result of these problems is that Salinger becomes desperate in his style. Seeming not to know what to do next, he sets off in wild pursuit of himself, of the old Salinger. The voice under the prose begins to sound as if it belongs to Mann's Aschenbach, still dying his hair and powdering his face and chasing all over Venice for a glimpse of the boy. Since he can no longer reach the sensual world, Salinger must use a thousand abstract words to describe what once took ten concrete ones. For his lost charm, he substitutes archaisms, cutenesses, coynesses, leaden mannerisms. Listen to Buddy describing himself helping people into cars:

> I was not only twenty-three but a conspicuously retarded twenty-three. I remember loading people into cars without any degree of competence whatever. On the contrary, I went about it with a certain disingenuous, cadetlike semblance of single-mindedness, of adherence to duty. After a few minutes, in fact, I became all too aware that I was catering to the needs of a predominantly older, shorter, fleshier generation, and my performance as an arm taker and door closer took on an even more thoroughly bogus puissance. I began to conduct myself like an exceptionally adroit, wholly engaging young giant with a cough.

Salinger also tries to get some feelings into the piece; there are none handily about, so he constructs them. Take a look at this Gigantic-Orchestration-Of-Feelings-Appropriate-to-Great-Themes Charade that Buddy plays out after reading Seymour's diary while sitting on the edge of the bathtub:

> I remember closing the diary—actually, slamming it shut—after the word "happy." I then sat for several minutes with the diary under one arm, until I became conscious of a certain discomfort from having sat so long on the side of the bathtub. When I stood up, I found I was perspiring more profusely than I had all day, as though I had just got out of a tub, rather than just been sitting on the side of one. I went over to the laundry hamper, raised the lid, and, with an almost vicious wrist movement, literally threw Seymour's diary into some sheets and pillowcases that were on the bottom of the hamper. Then, for want of a better,

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> more constructive idea, I went back and sat down on the side of the bathtub again. I stared for a minute or two at Boo Boo's message on the medicine-cabinet mirror, and then I left the bathroom, closing the door excessively hard after me, as though sheer force might lock up the place forever after.

Listen to all that Great Emotion banging like a broken piano in an old silent-movie house. What is Buddy's violent reaction all about? Is it his response to having read that sopping fraud, his older brother, whom he adores? He carries on as if Seymour were a sudden revelation to him, and yet he has known him intimately and spiritually all his life. Buddy is there to feel for us as in the Hollywood movies, so that we will know that Seymour's writings are Enormities, not Inanities. But Buddy himself isn't feeling a thing. How could he, when he is just a pile of cold words? And when Seymour is just a pile?

By the time he is done with "Raise High," Salinger is faced with a demented fraud playing Satori, a bunch of grotesques playing common humanity, and a clownish vacuum playing himself. He can't look forward; he can't look backward; and he can't stay where he is because it is a loveless, unloving nowhere. What is he to do? Where is he to turn?

"ZOOEY," the longest of the four late pieces, was published in 1957, and though it appears to be a sequel to "Franny," it is actually a sequel to its more immediate predecessor. It is an attempt by Salinger to rescue, first of all, his own spiritual status by offering a Way of Love to the world, and a way, indeed, of loving those very same people he himself hates. It is also an attempt to rescue Seymour by making him the ultimate inventor of the Way. To avoid putting Seymour to any further tests, he keeps him out of the story. And to avoid putting the Way of Love to a test, Salinger keeps from the story anyone who might possibly upset him. Thus, not a Black in sight anywhere. Everyone is White—Franny, Zooey, and their mother—and they are all locked in the White Castle, the Glasses' Manhattan apartment. The action takes place a couple of days after "Franny," and Franny is home, but still in anguish. Her worried mother has a long dialogue with her sixth son Zooey while he takes a bath. She pleads with him to help Franny, and though he tries, he cannot. However, he is a television actor and he has a great plan up his sleeve which involves an elaborate interplay of identities, so cumbersome and complicated that you can't help tripping over a bunch of allegorical wires. (I don't know what it all means.) He goes to Seymour's and Buddy's old room and, using Seymour's telephone, which is on Buddy's desk, he calls Franny on the family telephone and, using Buddy's voice at first, but then later his own, and quoting Seymour, he cures Franny's anguish by telling her that everyone is Jesus Christ and therefore they all merit love even if they stink. (By this he means the Blacks, like Lane Coutell and the wedding guests in "Raise High" and everyone else in the world who isn't named Glass.) It is rather like the end of a Russian movie; the heartbroken girl unexpectedly hears a speech by a commissar and is made miraculously whole. Zooey-Buddy-Seymour's Christianity sounds very sweet, and Franny buys it, but of course it is just garbage. All Zooey is saying is that if you close your eyes and pretend that the Blacks are Whites, then you can love them, especially when they're not around, and especially when the particular "everyone" that Zooey is referring to is an imaginary fat lady that Seymour dreamed up to represent the non-Glasses.

Well, perhaps Salinger is fooling Franny and himself into feeling that Seymour, because he has provided the Way, is no fraud, and perhaps Salinger is enthralled by his spiritual status after having twisted out a syllogism that grants he loves the lower orders and yet permits him to avoid any soiling contact with them. However,

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that Salinger continues to loathe, has indeed increased his loathing of, things human is shown by the way he must sterilize the physical. When Zooey berates Franny for refusing Mama Glass's chicken soup, he berates her because she doesn't realize that it is "consecrated" chicken soup. And observe the way Salinger neutralizes Zooey's beauty; Buddy is the narrator, though he doesn't appear in the story:

> Close up, either full-face or in profile, he was surpassingly handsome, even spectacularly so. His eldest sister . . . has asked me to describe him as looking like "the blue-eyed Jewish-Irish Mohican scout who died in your arms at the roulette table at Monte Carlo." A more general and surely less parochial view was that he had just barely been saved from too-handsomeness, not to say gorgeousness, by virtue of one ear's protruding slightly more than the other. I myself hold a very different opinion from either of these. I submit that Zooey's face was close to being a wholly beautiful face. As such, it was of course vulnerable to the same variety of glibly undaunted and usually specious evaluations that any legitimate art object is.

Whatever flesh may have been on Zooey's surpassingly handsome face at the beginning of that description is thoroughly ripped off by the time we get to "holy" (spelled "wholly") beautiful. No, sir, you can't lust after our Zooey. And to make sure lust never even stirs in the reader, Salinger prefaces the face with this: "From the rear—particularly where his vertebrae were visible—he might almost have passed for one of those needy metropolitan children who are sent out every summer to endowed camps to be fattened and sunned." Where Zooey's body is submerged in the bath, water has a "dehydrating effect on him." Where his knees stick out, they are "dry islands." Body is so utterly negated in Zooey—as it is indeed in all the other Glasses—that when he characterizes Franny's statements that Lane Coutell is a nice boy as "just sex talking, buddy. I know that voice. Oh, do I know that voice!" the reader feels that if Zooey *does* know that voice, it must be from having heard it over the radio. (I imagine that Salinger's justification for unsexing the Glasses is that he wants to attribute to them, though they are adults, the same innocence that belonged to the children he used to write about.)

"Zooey" is nearly as bad a story as "Raise High." Salinger fails to gives his characters any degree of life, and he fails to give substance or reality to their whereabouts, despite the endless cataloguings of furniture and household items. Since most of the story is in dialogue, the characters must live through their voices. But their voices are never heard. Salinger individualizes and characterizes them with the dogtag method: Zooey is identifiable by mild oaths and the fact that he calls everyone "buddy"; Mrs. Glass is identifiable by oodles of italics; and Franny is identifiable by references to her crisis.

ANY NUMBER of Salinger's readers—Alfred Kazin and John Updike among the most illustrious—have pointed out that he loves the Glasses too much and too exclusively. I think they are doing him the kindness of taking an attempt for an achievement, the protestation for the sentiment. Though he is trying very hard to act like it, I don't for a minute believe Salinger loves the Glasses. I think he probably hates them because they have never been willing to live off themselves, because he has had to construct them into pseudo-life, and thus they must represent for him the lifelessness of the idea he asks them to embody. I would guess the Glasses came into existence as postulates of the second half of the Satori road only after Salinger had despaired of getting beyond the first. To keep them alive may be for him some way of keeping the road open. Yet, they have walled up what is probably Salinger's only possible path to salvation: his art. Rebirth can come only after one gives up the idea of it; and paradox-

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ically, Salinger's death-to-life can perhaps come only after he dies to death-to-life.

The marvel of "Seymour: An Introduction," which appeared in 1959, is that Salinger confronts himself. It is a chronicle of the confrontation between the writer and the saint, and he hardly bothers to pretend it is a fiction. How disingenuous it was of all those critics and reviewers to have spoken of the piece as though it were a story, and how heartless it was of them who had loved him so much to have rapped him on the knuckles because he, the emperor, was the first to point out that he was wearing no clothes, had in fact been naked for years. "Seymour" is a courageous act, a much more personal display than having photographs published or signing books in department stores or making public appearances. And having given himself totally to those who had been lusting after him ever since *The Catcher,* all they did was respond by crying, "Shame!"

Yes, of course, "Seymour" is mannered and self-conscious and boring, but so were the other Glass pieces—and they were in addition dishonest, except for "Franny"—even though Salinger managed to keep these things hidden from his readers, if not from himself. What he says in "Seymour" is that he cannot live without Seymour, that he cannot give up writing about Seymour even though he *cannot* write about Seymour, that there is no Seymour and he must construct him piece by piece, feature by feature. And in the process of saying so, all the literary pretensions and affectations and mannerisms are knitted into a hair-shirt which he is going to wear because that is the Way he has chosen for himself.

"Seymour" makes me think again of Aschenbach, this time in the confessional. Despite his makeup and dyed hair, he is confessing with all his heart and repenting with all his heart. His contrition is complete. Yet when he steps out of the church, where is he to go? All the waters of Venice flow back to his love. All of Salinger's roads lead back to Seymour, or to silence, or to both.

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ARNOLD MANDEL

FRANCE'S ALGERIAN JEWS

IT HAS been estimated that after the Liberation there were between 150,000 and 165,000 persons of Jewish origin living in France; at present, there are between 450,000 and half a million Jews. Thus the Jewish population has tripled in the course of the last 16 or 17 years, increasing through immigration in about the same proportion and at the same rate as the population of Israel. This new immigration came in successive waves: from the DP camps located all over Europe right after the end of the war; from Poland and Rumania before the iron curtain was lowered for good; from Hungary after the 1956 uprising; from Egypt in the wake of the Suez crisis. Throughout this entire period there has also been a steady immigration from North Africa, especially from the impoverished *mellahs* of Tunisia and Morocco—not, as might be expected from the coincidence in date, for political reasons but for purely economic ones.

The most recent and biggest influx thus far, however, has been the politically stimulated mass exodus of Jews from Algeria since the Évian Agreements of March 1962—an exodus which has resulted in the transplanting of no less than 110,000 (out of a total of 150–160,000) Algerian Jews into France. Unlike the earlier waves of postwar immigrants, who were "rehabilitated" quite rapidly (largely with the assistance of Jewish agencies) and who have left scarcely a mark on the spiritual content of French Judaism, the Algerians have, through the power of sheer numbers, virtually transformed the character of the French-Jewish community, giving it a predominantly Sephardic cast.

Among other changes, there has been a modification of the geographical distribution of Jews in France, so that whereas until quite recently most French Jews lived north of the Loire (mainly concentrated in and near Paris, with fairly important centers in the East), the Algerian Jews, whenever possible, have chosen the Midi, which seems less alien to them. Marseilles, where a few years ago there were only about 1500 Jews, now has a Jewish population of 50,000. Apart from this, a large proportion of the rank-and-file workers in Jewish organizations and institutions are now Algerian; in Strasbourg, for instance, Algerians constitute a full 50 per cent of the employees of the various Jewish community agencies. (There are also three Algerian rabbis.) And French cities like Valence, Vienne, and Montélimar, which never had Jewish communities, or at least none since the flourishing period of medieval French Judaism, now house substantial numbers of North African Jews.

Sociologically, the Algerian Jews who

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have come to France since Évian are difficult to pinpoint, if only because they represent every stratum of Algerian-Jewish society. There are professors and rabbis and social workers, doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians, and medical assistants; but there are also secretaries and salesladies, usherettes and waitresses, textile workers, accountants, small businessmen, and minor civil servants—not to mention professional soldiers of every rank, and manual laborers. A whole population has, in short, been uprooted and thrown into confusion.

This unprecedented mass immigration —administratively classified not as refugees or displaced persons, but rather as "repatriated" Frenchmen—raises obvious social and economic "problems." Yet the technical problems of relocation and rehabilitation are, if anything, the easiest to solve, given the present economic prosperity of France and the conscientious attitude of the official Jewish agencies. The less tangible aspects of the Algerian-Jewish problem are, however, a good deal more burdensome, for they involve nothing less than the question of the ultimate survival of these newcomers as Jews.

The life they were forced to flee was, at least in the matter of Jewish identity, non-problematic. The Jews of Algeria were—for better or worse—a community, and a Jewish community at that, if for no other reason than that a hostile environment defined them as such. Having moved to France, they are naturally attempting to reconstitute this existence within the framework of the French-Jewish community, but the attempt is bound to fail; partly, of course, because of the fundamental difference between European and non-European Judaism, but mainly because of the particular nature of French Jewry. Frustrated, puzzled, and somewhat disillusioned in their encounter thus far with their fellow Jews north of the Mediterranean, the Algerians are in danger of losing their precarious Jewish identity altogether.

IN WHAT was lately "*Algérie française,*" the Jewish communities lived quite to themselves, to some degree perhaps still bound to the complex of Judeo-Arabic culture and traditions, but largely emancipated from these ties. French citizens by virtue of the 1871 Crémieux Decree of collective naturalization, the Algerian Jews always held a somewhat glorified image of France. They knew very little of their "nation" except in its ideal dimensions: its much-celebrated spirit of tolerance, its respect for personal liberty, its generosity—those classical French virtues which, albeit absent now and again from the conduct of national affairs, have been inculcated as articles of faith in French schools for generations. Broadly speaking, France represented for Algerian Jews (and even for the Jews of Tunisia and Morocco insofar as they came under French influence) something similar to what 19th-century Germany stood for in the minds of many emancipated Russian Jews: a Europe of high culture and civilization, an El Dorado of public libraries and universities, in striking contrast to the culturally arid regions of Cossack barbarism. In fact, in the countries of French colonization in North Africa, the equivalent of the Cossack horde was the primitive *bellah,* the sporadically violent and unpredictable mosque crowd.

In the West, when a Jew happens to become aware of his isolation and alienation from his surroundings, the ensuing struggle—even if it takes only the form of a soliloquy—is joined against this very West, which becomes the terrain, the battleground. (I have lived, for instance, in Paris since the end of my childhood; yet though it is my city, I know that in the 13th century the Talmud was publicly burned here, and I cannot entirely forget it. I know exactly the place where the stake was set up, and I pass by it now and then. Should the occasion arise, my anger would be addressed to this very Paris, today's metropolis, which, despite all its metamorphoses, still harbors

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within itself, both actually and potentially, the medieval city of the *auto-da-fé*.) For the Algerian Jew, however, the situation is different. His historical memories of suffering and humiliation relate primarily to the old Moslem Algeria, the very Algeria that France effaced: the Kingdom of Tlemcen, the rule of the Deys, the tyranny of the Ottoman officials—in short, all the institutions of Oriental oppression from which the French delivered them. France (and the West), therefore, do not represent a potentially hostile non-Jewish world, but rather a friendly beckoning force. (The Chief Rabbi of Lyon who expressed to a devout member of his congregation—a "repatriated" Algerian Jew—his astonishment at the latter's impending marriage to a non-Jewish girl, received the reply: "But my fiancee isn't a *goy*, she's French.")

This is not to deny, of course, that the Frenchmen of Algeria, the *"pieds-noirs,"* and even the mass of European workers in the big Algerian cities—artisans, shopkeepers, officeworkers, and minor officials —were largely anti-Semitic. When the Vichy regime—which held Algeria in tow until the American landings—revoked the Crémieux Decree and reassigned to the Algerian Jews their pre-1871 status as "indigenous Israelites," it was the Europeans and not the Moslems who applauded. (During this same period, it was the European students at the University of Algiers who voted a motion demanding reinstatement and a stricter application of the anti-Jewish *numerus clausus*.) Yet the Jews never regarded these hostilities as emanating from France. Given the fact that the majority of the *"pieds-noirs"* were of Spanish, Italian, or Maltese origin, their anti-Semitism could conveniently be attributed to their "foreign" character, to their "barbarism" as Andalusians or Sicilians.

Except for the southernmost enclaves on the borders of the Sahara, where the Judeo-Arab idiom still prevailed, the Jewish communities of Algeria had by 1960 become completely French-speaking, completely French in sentiment, orientation, and culture. Moreover, in the process of abandoning their membership in the Arab world and Gallicizing themselves over the course of the past seventy years, the Algerian Jews in effect gave up much of their specifically Jewish personality: the style of their daily life had been too intricately involved in the Moorish structure for the dismantling to occur without a marked loss. Of the old pietistic Cabbalism only a few vague traces remained on the eve of the exodus.

But if the "Gallicization" of the Algerian Jews strongly diluted their Judaism, it did not at the same time result in a positive integration into the French community. For despite over 125 years of *présence française* and a million French citizens (as opposed to 8 million Moslems), no such community ever really existed in Algeria. France manifested her presence only in the form of garrisons, forts, schools, residential districts, gas pumps, police stations, model farms, and, on the level of social life, a few stale salons in Algiers where the Anglophilia popular in Proust's Paris was fanatically cultivated. The more important reason for the failure of the Algerian Jews to assimilate, however, is inherent in the very nature of an Islamic country. When an individual is assigned a status in these societies the only factors that count are his religion and his family ties. Formal nationality, language, cultural identification, even behavior and habits are all set aside. Thus, an Algerian Arab has never regarded a fellow countryman who happens to be a Jew as a Frenchman, but only as a Jew. The Christian European living in Algeria, for that matter, also saw the Algerian Jew as a Jew and not as a Frenchman. In fact, the term "Frenchman" in Algeria was never used specifically to designate a person of French birth or ancestry, but was rather applied to anyone who was neither Arab nor Jew.

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This situation, and all that it implied, was not without a positive effect, for it obliged the Algerian Jews from the outset to assume and even to assert their Jewish identity without hesitation or ambiguity. Hence in the perpetual ethnic contest waged by the Arabs, Kabyles, Mozabites, Corsicans, Andalusians, Sicilians, and Maltese, the Jews of Algeria were far from laggards. Their synagogue was at the very center of the town, and the ordinary Jew, postman or gas-meter reader, making his rounds felt as much protected by its benign shadow as his remote colleague in Provence or Burgundy did by the steeple of the country church. Few Algerian Jews, to be sure, were very adept in Jewish practices, but virtually none on the other hand was absolutely ignorant—as are so many of their co-religionists north of the Mediterranean—in matters pertaining to their religion and their people.

If, then, the situation of the Jews in Algeria was not without tension, it at least had the virtue of being unequivocal. All boundaries were clearly marked and all the players knew from the start the roles assigned to them. Thus the tacit social ostracism directed against the Algerian Jewish community by the "true" Europeans, while never for an instant suspended, was nonetheless mitigated by an unfailing and unquestioned official courtesy. Though members of *"pied noir"* families never set foot in even the most socially prominent Jewish homes, there was no official Jewish function—lecture, dedication ceremony, or important funeral—that was not attended by at least one representative of the Catholic clergy, of the prefecture, of the Army even, as well as by a mufti or Moslem aedile. The Jewish community was recognized *de facto* and *de jure,* and as a duly authorized body it was entitled to, and received, all the outward signs of official respect.

It was on the whole a happy and rather peaceful life, full of *petit-bourgeois* propriety and lower-class zest. As seems to be the case almost everywhere, the Jews of Algeria were more than proportionately represented in the professions, and their children were almost all receiving secondary and higher education. Virtually everyone was more or less of a Zionist—and every Jewish lady with a modicum of social status belonged to W.I.Z.O. One gave one's heart and one's cash to Israel, but *aliyah* from Algeria was until the last numerically quite insignificant. Like any provincial life, it left unsatisfied both exigent minds and extreme temperaments, but these could always find their way to Paris—as did, for instance, the painter Jean Atlan; the brilliant young theologian and exegete of the Talmud and the Cabbalah, Léon Askenasi; the boxer Robert Cohen.

So stable was their existence that even with the crisis imminent the Jews of Algeria had scarcely begun to realize their danger. For a long time their land had been the scene of brief and temporary flareups, and few doubted that this violence, too, would peter out. Moreover, the emergency economic measures taken by the French government to avoid political bankruptcy—mass investment of capital in the industrial complex known as the Constantine Plan—were reaping a temporary harvest of prosperity which did not go unenjoyed. True, people were killing each other in the *djebells,* trains were being blown up here and there, but the Jews in their own cafés went right on sipping their aperitifs of "Phenix" anisette (because it was allegedly kosher—though a liqueur is not, in fact, subject to dietary laws; the "real" Europeans always ordered "Gras" anisette, purely Aryan, while the Arabs, scorning all alcohol, drank only mint tea and ultimately won their case).

With Évian, however, the danger became plain to all, and the tents of Jacob collapsed completely in *Algérie française.* Only about 40,000 Jews are left in the Republic of Algeria—the rest have fled, a

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few to Israel, the great majority to France. Among the frightened and angry fugitives there were some who remembered to take away with them the Scrolls of the Law as an offering to the synagogues awaiting them at the end of their flight. The congregation at Strasbourg, for example, now boasts a particularly precious specimen, decorated with splendid chased-silver mountings.

In a state of mind, then, colored by fury as much as by shock and fear, the Algerian Jews have arrived in France. They are all fugitives, of course, but fugitives who have slammed the doors behind them. Almost all feel that they are victims of a tremendous injustice, and this contributes to the psychological burdens besetting them. They feel that they have been deprived, that everything belonging to them has been given to the Arab—their streets and houses and household pets, their neighborhood pools, the cafés which were their second homes. To attempt, by way of re-education, to call their attention to the fundamental injustices of colonialist regimes, to argue that relationships in any society based on racism are of necessity foredoomed, is useless. In this regard their mentality is not too different from that of the *"pieds-noirs."* But unlike the latter, entrenched by their resentment in an absurd irredentism, the Algerian Jew—newly relocated by the tutelary administration in too small an apartment in a barracks-building on the outskirts of Paris—will not become the White Russian of the Algerian revolution. The nostalgia is there, but he lacks, fortunately, the fanaticism. A man must, after all, live, particularly when there is a family to support and one which in most cases is made up not only of a wife and children, but also of parents and often assorted unmarried brothers and sisters.

As a first step in rebuilding their lives, the Algerians rent office sites and set up kosher slaughter-houses, for which purpose they have no difficulty in obtaining the aid of French Jewish organizations and agencies. Things can always be managed so long as it is merely a question of money (fund-raising drives for the Algerian Jews have been surprisingly, most successful in Alsace, which is perhaps the region most remote by tradition and temperament from Sephardic, Mediterranean Judaism). But it is when the Algerians make demands that cannot be met by mere philanthropy that the real problems emerge. Thus, the first major disillusionment the Algerians encountered was their discovery of the pitifully inadequate provisions for Jewish education in France. In all of France, there exist only three Jewish *lycées* and one Jewish primary school (three of which institutions are located in Paris), and there are simply not enough teachers who have mastered both French and Jewish culture to open new Jewish schools where they are needed. This cruel inadequacy has produced the first of many shocks of disappointment among the Algerian Jews, for their rather naïve faith in *la grandeur française* also included French Judaism. (The Chief Rabbi of France was in their eyes something like the General de Gaulle of the synagogue.)

The irony is that the Algerian refugees feel more Jewish today in France than they ever felt before, not only because the tribulations of exile (which neither they nor their ancestors had ever experienced before) inordinately "Judaize" those who suffer them, but, more importantly, because in their present insecurity the Jewish tradition provides perhaps the only source of stability and continuity within reach. Hence the importance they attach to such matters as kosher food, and the intransigence of their demands in this regard upon the French-Jewish communities—demands which more than a few of their would-be benefactors in the French-Jewish communities have found astonishing and unjustified in view of the fact that in general behavior the Algerian Jews, with rare exceptions, do not give the im-

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pression of great piety. Almost all, for example, will accept work on Saturdays, and indeed (as public school teachers and civil servants) many had long since abandoned the observance of the Sabbath even in Algeria. Yet this apparent concession to secularism by no means puts the Algerian Jew on the same level of indifference in religious matters as the larger part of European Jewry, for the spirit in which he approaches these matters is entirely different. Those very exigencies of history which have to some extent diluted his Judaism have also made him loath to part with it; and moreover, acting upon a certain fatalism inherent in the Oriental temperament has rendered him adept at compromise. The same Jews who find nothing amiss in working on the Sabbath will abstain from smoking on that day, for "we have to work, but we don't have to smoke."

THUS, taking the French Jew rooted in France, and then the displaced Algerian Jew arriving in France and presumably in search of those same roots, it is a mistake to assume that any kind of real parity exists that might facilitate their encounter. Indeed, this mistaken assumption has done much to compound the bewilderment of the Algerian arrivals, imbued as they were with the conviction that just as the Jews of France were more "French" than they, so must they also be more Jewish. In fact, the opposite is true. The 110,000 new arrivals are Jews by conviction and religious practice, if not by culture; Judaism, however tenuous and however arbitrarily interpreted, is part of their conscious personality and permeates their family life. In France, on the other hand (the North Africans excepted), there are certainly no more than 25,000 Jews who *live* in their Judaism, beyond a morbid obsession with the episodic revival of anti-Semitism. There has, to be sure, been an increase in Jewish identification among a certain sector of the youth, particularly at the universities, and the enthusiasm that attended the birth of the State of Israel continues in the form of support of its policies and concern with its fate. Yet Judaism as an active state of consciousness is virtually over and done with for the vast majority. Assimilation on a mass scale proceeds quite automatically, without prejudice or principle. The assimilated Jew is not a conscious advocate of assimilation (which would at least indicate some involvement with the question), nor for that matter does he appear hostile to Jewish tradition or culture. He does not act, he is acted upon; he does not assimilate, he *is assimilated*.

Nor has it ever been different in modern French history. Except for Alsace, where the Jewish community is deeply rooted, its history continuous from the Middle Ages, Judaism has not been a living reality in modern France. Where anti-Semitism is absent, its absence is based on a deliberate refusal to acknowledge that there are such people as Jews—on, that is, a sort of benign negation of the existence of Judaism altogether. The middle class does not use the term "Jew," for example, but refers to "Israelites" and even to "the Israelite milieu." In the market place "Jew" is an epithet applied variously to cunning, greed, or to stinginess. If the phrase "Jewish worker" is used in talking to a French factory worker, he will burst out laughing at the idea that such a thing exists—even when there is one under his very nose, dressed in overalls, his hands covered with grease, and asserting flatly that he is a Jew.

Hence the repatriated Algerian Jew is up against the further dilemma that sociologically he fits into none of the orderly categories of French society—being in fact no less exotic to French Jews than to French gentiles. Just as his French identity once kept him from the Arab world, it threatens now to keep him from the Jewish one—without thereby making him more comprehensible to metropolitan Frenchmen.

Let us, as an illustration, take the quite

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typical case of the "repatriated" policeman, who has cursed, wept, and prayed, who has counted at one point on Salan, and said harsh things about de Gaulle. To the administration, nevertheless, he is merely a *gendarme* transferred from one town to another. Having no apparent need of help and caring not at all about the usual measures of social or economic "rehabilitation"—for policeman he was and policeman he remains—his case has nothing to do with the *Fonds Social Juif Unifié* (the French-Jewish central fund-raising agency). In Algeria, this policeman was accustomed to attend—in uniform, of course, for he is forbidden to wear civilian clothes—the Sabbath morning service. He was a member in good standing of the congregation and all the faithful knew him by name. But even had he been unknown, no one would have been surprised to see him walking in the procession, pressing a *Sefer Torah* against his service jacket. No one would have found it strange that a Jew should be a policeman or a policeman a Jew, for there were many more like him.

Now, in the French town not far east of Paris where this *gendarme* makes his rounds, it happens that there is a Jewish community and a Jewish synagogue. The first time our *gendarme* appears at the services, he rouses a minor panic among the worshippers. A *gendarme* comes only "in the name of the law." What then are the charges? After some explanation, the other Jews understand: "I'm an Algerian Jew; in Algeria there were a lot of Jewish *gendarmes;* I want to come to services every Saturday and to be registered as a member of the community." After a few smiles, matters are arranged. But the others, his colleagues in the police, have never come across this constabulary Judaism, and for them it is a joking matter: "So, *mon brigadier,* you're a Jew and you go to synagogue! Why don't you take us once in a while?" For them a Jew is a financier, and they suspect their *pied-noir* "*copain*" of being the victim of delusions. The policeman then recounts his experiences at home to his family. His wife reminds him that it is "different here" and urges him to forget about the synagogue, or run the risk of appearing ridiculous. The children say nothing, but think their own thoughts.

Among the Algerian Jews reestablished in France, there are thousands of civil servants now weathering such changes in social climate and temperature. For the rank-and-file North African Jew, Judaism is first of all a kind of *lares*—his domestic safeguard and protection—and then the definition of the group to which he belongs. If this ordinary man with neither the talent for, nor any pretension to, profound religious experience is to continue in the path of his ancestral tradition, that path must be ratified by external authority, consecrated as worthy and honorable by the government, the clergy, the military, the press. In Algeria, despite the ambience of anti-Semitism among the Europeans and the anti-Jewish prejudices among the majority of Moslems, this was indeed the case. The Algerian synagogue was too much a part of the landscape as a consecrated place for anyone to dare speak ill of it. The Jewish religion was, in fact, one of the four official religions of Algeria, more significant—and hence given more encouragement—than, for example, Protestantism, which represented only a tiny minority of the population and was largely supported by foreign missions. In France, however, the ordinary Algerian Jew has not yet been able to find the forms of that ongoing Jewish life that he so badly needs. Despite the official watchword, "integration," little effort has been expended toward bringing him into an organic relation with the synagogue and whatever exists of other French-Jewish religious institutions. (The upper ranks of Algerian Jewry, long since more "metropolitanized" than the multitudes, are better off in this respect, if in an uninspired way: they have joined the ranks

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of consistorial Judaism, moderately conservative, tepid, and reassuring.) Nor is there, unfortunately, on the part of the Algerian Jews any real impulse to seek out the other immigrant sectors of North African Jewry—notably the Tunisians and Moroccans—who are not French nationals and who sometimes do not even speak French. Despite the similarity of ritual and custom, the difference between the two Maghreb groups is a great one, and the arrogant phrase "We Algerians" plays an important role. This segregation is to be mourned, for the two groups could perhaps have been of mutual assistance.

Only in the purely intellectual milieu (not to be confused with that of the "liberal professions"), where the area of specific interest and the value of intellectual categories are more important factors than "ethnic" or sub-ethnic perceptions, has there been any degree of real integration or symbiosis. The same is true to a lesser extent in Orthodox circles (which occasionally overlap with the intellectual ones). Here it is indisputable that the Algerian Jewish exodus will ultimately exert a postive influence, a gain in spiritual vitality, a current of revivalism.

But what about the others—the great host of refugees still in mourning for the Jewish quarter of Constantine, for the famous Bab-el-Oued of Algiers, for the Judeo-Spanish Sabbath *paseo* in the avenues of Oran, and for all those little towns associated with sunshine and simple happiness, Blida and Batna, Biskra and Cherchell, Ai'n-Temouchent, Tiaret, and Miliana? Paradoxically, it may yet turn out that they have come, at least in the matter of Jewishness, less as suppliants than as possible providers. Though it seems on the face of it that the 390,000-odd members of the French-Jewish community have before them the task of "integrating" the 150,000 Algerian Jews, one wonders whether, in fact, the Algerian Jews will not perhaps succeed in infusing some of their own vitality and particular color into the pallidness of French-Jewish life. The alternative is that the Algerian Jews—unable to rebuild in France their traditional sanctuary, lacking the specific structures and institutions of life in North Africa that held their identity together, and finding little response in the French-Jewish community—will succumb to that same aimless assimilation and dis-identification that afflicts their fellow Jews of the West.

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ALEXANDER M. BICKEL

REAPPORTIONMENT & LIBERAL MYTHS

IN THE decade since Earl Warren became Chief Justice of the United States, the Court over which he presides has embarked on three major enterprises of social reform—a number higher than the historical average for comparable periods, to say the least. The reforms in question are the desegregation of public schools; the restriction, and even, it would seem, the abolition of practices of religious observance in those schools; and the reapportionment of state legislatures and perhaps also of Congress. The earliest of these reforms, desegregation, has survived an extremely serious political challenge, and now promises to move forward along well-defined lines toward a goal that is widely acceptable and nowhere misunderstood. The second, concerning school prayers, seems likely to face an equally serious challenge, which it may fail to survive. Though still in need of more than a little clarification, the goal of this reform is at any rate capable of being proclaimed in principled terms and of commanding deliberate adherence as well as opposition. The third reforming enterprise, reapportionment, differs from desegregation and school prayers—and is, indeed, not quite like anything else in the recorded experience of the Supreme Court—in that the decision that launched it a year ago (*Baker v. Carr*) has evoked a speedy, ample, and largely favorable response, although nobody understands what the decision means or can know where it will, or was intended to, lead.

It is, in retrospect, not difficult to appreciate why the response to *Baker v. Carr* has been what it has. Malapportionment has for years been the cynosure of assorted muckrakers—a common, catch-all grievance, the supposed cause of urban rot and of the obsolescence of federalism, the real reason, for all we know, why "wealth accumulates, and men decay"; and so something of an embarrassment even to those who benefit from it. The agitators for reform were straining at the starting gate. The Supreme Court fired a starting gun, and the reformers were off. But they cannot long continue to run without knowing where. The curious failure of the Court to announce any comprehensible goal is therefore a matter of some consequence. It means that we ought not be overly impressed by the initial response, and that, of the Warren Court's three reforming enterprises, this one, which began in a sense most hopefully, is perhaps the least likely to play a substantial and enduring role in shaping our society.

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BAKER *v.* CARR (March 1962) marked a sharp break with precedent. Previously the Court had turned aside all attacks on state or congressional apportionments and on kindred political arrangements either

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by declining to take jurisdiction or by very briefly and inscrutably indicating that the system under attack did not violate any constitutional principle. This was, on the whole, an unsatisfactory situation. The Court's position, never precisely or comprehensively stated, was subject to grave misapprehension. Why had the Court approved certain apportionments, while neither approving nor disapproving others? Could the refusal to approve or disapprove be construed as itself a form of approval? Moreover, the Court also treated obsolete apportionments—those that are the simple product of indecision and inertia—no differently than deliberately contrived malapportionments. Normally, in respect of other matters, legislative inertia and the express legislative will are not dealt with indiscriminately in the Supreme Court. The sum of it was that, willy-nilly, the Court was helping to entrench the status quo.

The decision in *Baker v. Carr*—the fact of the decision and also some passages in the opinions of the Justices—cleared the air. The previous decisions, and all intimations that existing apportionments, obsolete or fresh, are necessarily constitutional were swept away. The case itself concerned, not a recent wilful malapportionment, but rather a sixty-year-old apportionment in Tennessee that had been rendered obsolete and oppressive by sheer inaction in the face of radical shifts of population. The decision made it clear that this situation could not be regarded as constitutionally valid, and predictably enough, the Tennessee legislature responded by acting at long last. Elsewhere as well, whether under pressure of pending lawsuits, or even before any were filed, the most widespread immediate result of *Baker v. Carr* was a flurry of legislative activity looking to fresh apportionments.

Seen as I have just described it, the decision in *Baker v. Carr* was welcome and unexceptionable. The trouble is that Mr. Justice Brennan's majority opinion went beyond an emphasis on the age of the Tennessee apportionment and held—or at least was taken to have held—that the constitutionality of all apportionments, recent or ancient, is henceforth to be passed on as a matter of course, in much the same fashion in which, say, racial practices or criminal procedures are generally brought to ultimate judgment in the Supreme Court. This reading of the decision rests on the following passage in Justice Brennan's opinion:

> Nor need the appellants, in order to succeed in this action, ask the Court to enter upon policy determinations for which judicially manageable standards are lacking. Judicial standards under the Equal Protection clause are well-developed and familiar, and it has been open to courts since the enactment of the Fourteenth Amendment to determine, if on the particular facts they must, that a discrimination reflects *no* policy, but simply arbitrary and capricious action.

Taking this passage as prescribing their function, numerous lower federal and state courts have during the past year struck down or threatened to strike down fairly recent apportionments on the ground that they were somehow irrational and unconstitutional. Some courts have even set their hand or threatened to set their hand to the task of themselves constructing new and constitutional apportionments. But the standard of judgment enunciated by Mr. Justice Brennan, which lower courts have purported to apply in all directions, and which the Supreme Court itself will be called upon to apply as appeals in apportionment cases mount on its docket—this standard, though it falls soothingly on the ear, is almost wholly meaningless. And because this standard is meaningless, judicially-directed reapportionment is unlikely to work in the way its enthusiastic supporters anticipate.

THE REQUIREMENT of rationality invoked by Justice Brennan is, to be sure, a familiar principle in American constitutional law. It stems from a celebrated

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paragraph of John Marshall's in *McCulloch v. Maryland* (1819), written with reference to the powers of Congress, but applicable as well to judicial review of acts of state legislatures:

> We admit, as all must admit, that the powers of the government are limited, and that its limits are not to be transcended. But we think the sound construction of the Constitution must allow to the national [or state] legislature that discretion, with respect to the means by which the powers it confers are to be carried into execution, which will enable that body to perform the high duties assigned to it, in the manner most beneficial to the people. Let the end be legitimate, let it be within the scope of the Constitution, and all means which are appropriate, which are plainly adapted to that end, which are not prohibited, but consist with the letter and spirit of the Constitution, are constitutional.

The test was restated just before the turn of the century in a famous paper entitled, "The Origin and Scope of the American Doctrine of Constitutional Law," by the constitutional scholar, James Bradley Thayer. A statute is to be declared unconstitutional, Thayer said, "when those who have the right to make laws have not merely made a mistake, but have made a very clear one—so clear that it is not open to rational question." The Supreme Court, in Thayer's view, is to be "the ultimate arbiter of what is rational and permissible."

More concretely, Marshall and Thayer were talking about a method of constitutional construction—that is, a method of interpreting the written document—which would result in the free exercise by the representative institutions of broad and effective powers of government, but not unlimited ones. Thus—in an illustration of Marshall's—the federal power to establish a postal system being conceded because it is one of those enumerated in the Constitution, it follows rationally that there should be power to punish interference with the movement of the mails. However, it may not follow rationally that because the federal government is empowered to "regulate commerce among the several states," it is also empowered to establish a uniform law of divorce: we should have to know more of the relation of divorces to the operation of a national economy before we could call this connection rational.

THERE is also a second, related sort of application of the test of rationality. In exercising any of its powers, government—state or federal—will be permitted to make only those choices that rest on an intelligible and plausible view of reality; only those choices, as Brandeis said, "which an informed, intelligent, just-minded, civilized man could rationally favor." And as in the first set of illustrations, what is here in question is not really a requirement of rationality so much as a requirement of the absence of demonstrable *ir*rationality. For, obviously, there are myriad legislative choices that are not rationally compelled, as indeed the very word choice implies. Thus, however disagreeable one might find such action, it would still be rational—given what is known of Communist doctrine—for a legislature to act on the belief that a man who belongs to the Communist party at the very least does not look with disfavor upon the violent overthrow of existing American institutions. But it is irrational in the light of common experience—and has been held so by the courts—for a legislature also to conclude that once a man is a Communist, he will always remain one, no matter what present disclaimers he may enter. Or again, a state may rationally conclude that members not only of the Communist party but also of organizations shown to have close connections with that party are in some sense disloyal. But it is surely irrational to conclude, and has been held so by the courts, that persons who joined and left an organization before it had any connection with the Communist party, or who joined not knowing about the connection, have

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given similar evidence of any kind of disloyalty.

The test of rationality is not, of course, invulnerable to certain lines of philosophical attack. I am not here concerned to defend it, aside from remarking that it has found a substantial practical utility in the working of the American constitutional scheme. But I am concerned with the obvious omission in this test—namely, the question, not whether a legislative choice is rational (whatever the tacit value judgment that may be implicit in that word), but whether it is good. Confronted, for example, with the issue of whether the federal government should be able to punish interference with the free movement of mails, it is quite satisfactory to most of us to be told that the power is one that can be rationally deduced from the undoubted authority of the federal government to run a post office. This is, as Thayer called it, a question of "mere power." But when it comes to excluding members of a Communist-front organization—let us assume for the moment that we know what that means—from government employment or from the Bar, it does not in the same fashion suffice to be informed that the action is rational. One wants to know also whether it is good, whether, in other words, it is consistent with principles of political freedom. The question is not merely one of power; it is also a question of liberty. It is possible to answer that legislatures should be free to make the choice of values that is involved, just as they are free to make other choices that are not irrational. But such a plenary legislative freedom has never quite characterized our constitutional system. By means of a complex, not unrestricted, and ultimately not uncontrolled process, the Supreme Court has participated in the making of many such fundamental value choices for our society.

RETURNING to the apportionment problem, one can now perhaps make quite plain that application of the rationality test, as suggested by Mr. Justice Brennan, is very nearly meaningless. Since it is conceded all around that the power to apportion—to create constituencies and otherwise regulate the manner in which public officials and legislators are elected—is a legitimate function of government, the question becomes whether this or that apportionment, restricting the electorate in this or that fashion, or favoring this or that portion of it with more or less influence, is rational—or rather, whether it is *ir*rational; the question, as always, is not whether reason compels the legislative choice, but whether reason is repelled by it. Now most, if not all, malapportionments favor rural interests over urban, allocate more strength proportionately to sparsely populated areas than to densely populated ones, and make other smaller discriminations within these large ones. This may be undesirable, but who can say that it is irrational? Is it more irrational than a farm policy that favors farmers or an anti-trust policy that favors small enterprise? Are such policies more irrational, indeed, than a policy that forces the majority to listen to ideas that it fears and hates, or to tolerate the possibility that its young will read Henry Miller? Mr. Justice Clark, concurring specially in *Baker v. Carr,* looked for an internal consistency in the apportionment system in Tennessee, and finding none, held the system to be irrational. But whence is the premise derived that an apportionment must not only be rational in the particular choices that it makes, but must proceed toward a single coherent objective?

The upshot is that, while there may be exceptions, particularly in highly obsolete apportionments, the conventional test of rationality cannot generally lead anywhere in this field—no more than it could lead anywhere in the field of racial discrimination. No doubt, given the present state of scientific knowledge, a legislature which acted on the assumption that Negroes are inherently less intelligent than whites, or that Jews are less likely to be honest than

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gentiles, would be held to have acted irrationally. There is no foundation for such an assumption in the common experience of informed, rational men, although there might be one in common prejudice. But for a legislature to conclude that racial tension is an existing fact of life, and that it is therefore best to segregate the races; or for it to conclude that most Negroes are not likely to go on to a university and that it is therefore not economical to maintain one for them—these are certainly not irrational acts. The Constitution is held to forbid them because they are bad in principle, because it is morally reprehensible for government to treat persons in this unequal fashion, no matter what the rational reason for doing so. Is there a similar principle that can be applied in the field of apportionment to restrict otherwise rational legislative choices?

This is the question that the Court not only left unanswered in *Baker v. Carr,* but actually went out of its way to obscure. One does not expect a full and complete answer to such a question to spring into life from a Court's first opinion on a problem, but neither does one expect the question to be willfully obfuscated. In any event, if it be true (as it was not with respect to racial discrimination and as it is not even with respect to school prayers) that no viable principle limiting a legislature's discretion to apportion rationally as it sees fit can as yet be worked out, then it follows that despite all the current furious activity and heightened expectations, we cannot look for any enduring result from this particular enterprise in judicially-directed reform.

The problem of apportionment seems to call forth in many people the most abstract notions concerning the nature and functioning of representative democratic government. The root idea, apparently, is the one stated by President Kennedy at a news conference on March 29, 1962, shortly after the decision in *Baker v. Carr.* "Quite obviously," said the President, "the right to fair representation, that each vote count equally is, it seems to me, basic to the successful operation of a democracy." The President went on to remark, forgetting perhaps where he once sat, that there "is no sense of a Senator representing five million people sitting next to a Senator representing ten thousand. . . ." But what does this imply? One-person-one-vote? And how? Proportional representation? At-large elections? Is districting to be allowed? What is the use of a second House, or must we all become unicameral, like Nebraska? It is very well to maintain that the federal Senate and the federal Electoral College are the product of an historical compromise, which is explained by particular historical circumstances and which is not applicable to the composition of the House of Representatives or of state legislatures. But are we to believe that our federal government lacks a feature that is "basic to the successful operation of a democracy?"—that, indeed, it contains an inconsistent feature, and is therefore not a successfully operating democracy?

WHAT the President said—and others equally sophisticated are capable of professing their devotion to such simplicities—describes some sort of town-meeting democracy, but not anything that has ever existed in this country on any larger scale, and certainly not anything that exists today. If the Supreme Court has undertaken to make reality conform to the one-person-one-vote-principle, it has set for itself the most enormous of conceivable tasks, on which one would expect it to be busily engaged for the next hundred years. Nevertheless, if a one-person-one-vote democracy is the goal toward which we should strive, then it would be the function of the Court to define it and set it before us, even though a hundred years might be needed to achieve it. The goal of racial equality, set before us in the *School Segregation Cases,* is not about to be attained tomorrow

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either, but we adhere to it anyway as one of whose worthiness we are now certain. Should we similarly adhere to the goal of voting equality? Is it what we are now certain we want? Is the true meaning of representative democracy to be found within it?

The principle of equality of representation proceeds from the premise that the representative institutions are something like animated voting machines, engineered to register decisions made by the electorate. These institutions are seen as a rather poor substitute for a decision-making process that works by direct vote of the people. As delegates of the people, they are authorized to dispose of unforeseen matters that were not settled at a prior election, but these decisions are to be ratified or rejected at the next election, and if possible sooner. And above all, as the French say, not too much zeal. Legislatures should meet infrequently, and terms of office should be very short.

The initiative and referendum movement, which engaged the enthusiasm of Progressives in the first decade or so of this century, but which can scarcely be said to have left a significant mark on our political system, operated on some such set of assumptions. And, indeed, on no other premise is equality of representation supportable as the overriding, all-important principle. For if the representative institutions are seen as properly exercising a relatively independent, deliberate decision-making function, elections and the vote become matters of a different order of importance. On this premise, the problem of democracy becomes one of access to, participation in, influence on the process of decision, and only ultimately and in necessarily attenuated fashion one of ensuring at election time the legislature's fidelity to the popular will.

THIS, of course, is how modern political science views the problem: the equal-vote premise ignores all that we have learned in a generation of fresh inquiry and reflection. And it ignores not only the laws of probability, but also—in a highly developed, pluralistic society—all the laws of possibility. We have come to realize that elections cannot be occasions when the electorate disposes of the common run of issues that governments are confronted with. But is this to say that elections are practically meaningless, a show-trial of democracy, a spectacle, an emotional binge, a morality play, or what-have-you? There have been those who have come close to arguing as much, particularly when in the throes of defending that plainly counter-majoritarian institution, the Supreme Court—which is a point of some little irony. The truth, however, is that some elections do sometimes turn on issues, although few and general, and no one knows ahead of time which issues they may turn on or how. This very ignorance is a factor in the process by which democratic government makes decisions, and we can therefore say that elections do influence decisions in some indeterminate measure. But the heart of democratic government and the morality which distinguishes it from other systems lie elsewhere: the heart of the matter is that democratic government rests on consent. And the secret of consent is only in part a matter of control, only in part the reserve power of a majority to rise up against decisions that displease it. Perhaps more importantly, it is the sense shared by all that their interests were spoken for in the decision-making process, no matter how the result turned out. Government by consent requires that no segment of society should feel alienated from the institutions that govern. This means that the institutions must not merely represent a numerical majority—which is a shifting and uncertain quantity anyway—but must reflect the people in all their diversity, so that all the people may feel that their particular interests and even prejudices, that all their diverse characteristics, were brought to bear on the decision-making process.

We have thus, and ought to have, ma-

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joritarian government in the sense that an essentially numerical majority has, and knows it has, the reserve power to turn out some discredited decision-makers, putting in others who will in future resist what has displeased it. But we also have, and ought to have, *reflective* government, to which general consent is given, and so government which is legitimate and stable. To achieve both of these aims, we have constructed not one but a number of institutions, and their constituencies are different. It is commonly true, both locally and nationally, that the executive—which has, of course, great powers of initiative as well as approval in the legislative process—is the instrument through which numerical majorities express and make effective such concrete wishes as they may be able to generate. It is also true that the legislature carries the burden of reflecting the diversities of population, and that it could not under any circumstances perform this function if it were built strictly on the one-person-one-vote principle. And where no such function is performed—where no reflective institutions have effective power that is shared in some measure by all groups, interests, factions, and other configurations in society—what we are accustomed to call democracy does not obtain. No matter how freely a strong majoritarian executive like General de Gaulle may be elected—although in his instance it is not even true that he is freely elected by a majority—and no matter how frequently he may put major decisions to a free majoritarian vote by referendum, the result will not be democratic government so long as no reflective institutions share power.

Supporters of reapportionment argue that the reflective character of our legislatures can be maintained through districting, but that districts need not be unequal in size. Yet the people's diversities are not all conveniently contained in equal contiguous districts; many interests and other configurations, far from being so clustered, would form permanent minorities throughout any number of equal districts. Are there enough Silk Stockings in New York, for example, to elect a Congressman from an equal, compact, contiguous silk-stocking district? It would take some map-making ingenuity to achieve an adequately reflective legislature on the equal vote principle. Thus, as Professor Phil C. Neal, of the University of Chicago Law School, has recently pointed out in an important paper on the subject, a requirement of equal districting would very likely prove self-defeating, for it is possible to achieve all the malapportionment in the world by careful gerrymandering of perfectly equal districts. Those who have been complaining might then have a magnificently equal vote that would never elect anyone. Proportional representation is a mathematically perfect way out, but as has been demonstrated time and again, it is a method that so fragments legislative institutions as to make them incapable of coherent and responsible government. Our institutions are over-fragmented as is; their capacity for inaction is one of the ills attributed to malapportionment. We tend to cure it through the two-party system, and justly complain that the cure is imperfect. Proportional representation invariably leads to a multi-party system, thus forcing the legislature to engage in the initial coalition-building process which needs to have taken place before the legislature is formed, if effective government is to ensue.

It is far from clear, then, to quote Professor Neal, that the one-person-one-vote idea "'suggests a principle which even the interests represented by the urban plaintiffs [in *Baker v. Carr* and like cases] could consider satisfactory under all circumstances, and even less clear that it is a principle which assures fair treatment to other interests equally entitled to fair treatment." It also follows from our analysis, however, that democratic government requires some institution to be available as an effective voice of the majority,

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and the executive, including the federal President, fulfills that function in our system. To be sure, the Electoral College seems to deflect the majoritarian character of the federal Presidency. Actually, however, not since 1888 have we elected a minority President in a two-party contest —and then Benjamin Harrison lost the popular vote by about the same tiny margin (although, of course, it was greater relatively) by which John F. Kennedy won it. In circumstances of such even balance, a toss of the coin, the Electoral College, or, as recently in Minnesota, a three-judge recount, serve—one about as well as another—to make a decisive choice and render it legitimate. Moreover, the Electoral College works in practice to strengthen the majoritarian influence, because its distortion of a true majority counterbalances precisely the distortion to be found in the malapportioned legislature. A President views his constituency as being weighted to the places where the major population centers are. Even Harrison won because he carried New York.

All governors are straight-out majoritarian. Until recently, Georgia constituted an exception, but no longer. The state provisionally abandoned the county-unit system in the 1962 election under pressure from a lower federal court, and on March 18, the Supreme Court made it final. Unfortunately, however, the Court, in an opinion by Mr. Justice Douglas, offered no tenable principle in support of its conclusion that election of governors and other state-wide officials by the county-unit method is unconstitutional. While the result of the case can be justified in terms of the analysis I have put forward, it is given the benefit of no coherent explanation in the Court's opinion, save only by invocation of the one-person-one-vote principle, which is untenable as a general proposition, and which evidently does not, as a general proposition, have the assent of all members of the Court's majority.

It remains to ask whether we have evolved or can see emerging some operative principle other than equal representation which is capable of general application. Neither the Supreme Court in the two cases—*Baker v. Carr* and the county-unit case—it has decided, nor any of the other courts that have been busily tackling the problem has come within shouting distance of such a principle. All we have been given are plays on words, plays on statistics, and meaningless figures arbitrarily picked out of thin air. One court, for example, held with a straight face that the ratio of population disparities between districts must be no more than 4–1. And why not, a commentator has asked, 5–1 or 3–1? Indeed, why not? Well, the answer may be, because the court said 4–1, not 5 or 3, and somebody has got to decide these things. But when things are to be decided on a hunch or out of thin air, because there is no other way, it is a fixed characteristic of our system that we let the political institutions do it. The political institutions reflect the people, even if imperfectly, and they include a governor responsive to a majority. Malapportioned though these institutions may be, they are more easily subject to correction and more nearly responsible and responsive than courts—which do not suffer from malapportionment, because they are neither apportioned nor representative. It is an irony to which I alluded earlier that the super-democrats should look to the unrepresentative courts for an arbitrary decision that they resent when it is made by a faulty representative legislature, acting in concert with a majoritarian governor.

Courts are fit to render judgment on questions of principle, which we do not, in our tradition, relegate to the political market-place, to be disposed of by one of those not irrational, but often intuitive or otherwise unverifiable choices that result from the play of conflicting interests. It may be that some principle applicable to apportionments which goes beyond the requirement merely that the

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executive be majoritarian can be worked out. If so, the first wisdom is to look at the reality of our political arrangements, the reality of our allocations of power to govern, and not at paper provisions and statistical nightmares. What does it mean to juggle ratios or to bewail the fact that 20 per cent of a state's population can elect a majority of its legislature, *X* per cent of the population of the United States can elect the President, and *X*-10 per cent can elect the Senate? These are not facts; such things never happen. The malapportioned federal Senate, for example, is more nearly majoritarian than the House, because Minneapolis and even Atlanta are coming to resemble New York and Cleveland more than they do their neighboring counties, and in state-wide elections, Minneapolis and Atlanta count heavily, and count even beyond the mere numbers of their people. If a tenable principle is ever to emerge, it will proceed from an understanding of the realities of power, of the role of parties and how they are run, of the role of money and of various relevant skills, of the state-wide influence of urban home-rule governments and of various groups and factions, and so forth and so on. When we know, as the title of Professor Robert A. Dahl's recent book puts it, "who governs," we may begin to be in a position to lay down a constitutional principle that tells us who *should* govern. Until then, our imperfect representative institutions are better fitted than the courts to tinker with the system.

The political arena is messier than the judicial, to be sure, but that is where all of us who feel under- or mis-represented should be, exerting every ounce of power and influence we can command. We may be right, but it may turn out, especially if we lose, that we were after all wrong. It is quite possible, for example, that malapportionment has been held responsible for too many evils, and that the responsiveness of our legislatures has been more gravely impaired by antiquated committee and seniority systems, and by other institutional habits that are seldom brought to light. Let a major political effort, led by majoritarian executives, be tried in that direction. So far as Congress is concerned, it may also be that it fails to act when it does because it *is* truly representative. The country, we should not forget, was very closely divided in 1960. This may be a deplorable fact, but it is scarcely undemocratic. As to state legislatures, urban rot, and the obsolescence of federalism, it may be that the real causes of our discontent are fiscal. The federal government has pre-empted the sources of public finance. State governments subsist in large measure on federal handouts. It is therefore somewhat less than surprising to find them relatively inert and irresponsible. Moreover, there is a finite amount of political energy and even attention in the people, and what there is the federal government, again, pre-empts more and more.

It is therefore question-begging to ask how we can force reapportionment, and a consequent solution of our problems, on a minority entrenched through malapportionment. The supposed minority may not be a minority at all; malapportionment may not be what entrenches it; and our problems may be rooted elsewhere anyway. If, nevertheless, we beg these questions, and assume a minority entrenched in the legislature through malapportionment, the answer is that the remedy lies with the majoritarian executive, whom we can influence, and whose own bargaining power can very properly be heightened by federal judicial holdings striking down obsolete apportionments and forcing legislatures to act affirmatively. The courts may be in no position to do more, but this much they can do.

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EDGAR Z. FRIEDENBERG

AN IDEOLOGY OF SCHOOL WITHDRAWAL

COMPULSORY school attendance in the United States has been justified from the beginning as essential to democratic polity. Everyone knows Madison's statement to the effect that popular government without popular education is the prelude to a tragedy, or a farce, or both. We have had both, continuously ever since. I have just finished Theodore White's *The Making of the President, 1960;* and I think this book is the strongest indictment of American public education I have ever seen, though Mr. White does not discuss the issue directly. Still, the laws are on the books. Within a century, with the Kalamazoo decision (1874), the legal basis had been laid for what Madison thought so necessary.

And, be it noted, for the reasons he gave. So far as I know, public support of education in this country has never been justified on the grounds that education was beneficial to the individual student, except to the extent that this pertained to equality of opportunity. It is logical to argue that the individuals who share the responsibilities of citizenship must learn what they have to do in order to discharge them. I wouldn't say the logic was watertight. In Louisiana, where I was raised, we have never regarded either ignorance or lunacy as a bar to high public office; and this liberalism has permitted us to enjoy unusually creative leadership. But, on the whole, the point is well taken. If public education can be justified on the grounds that it is essential to citizenship, it can also claim, for that reason, to be good for the future citizens themselves.

School attendance laws, however, are a very distorted reflection of the purpose implicit in Madison's phrase. They are not *licensing* laws. They do not require attendance until a specified minimum level of competence deemed essential to the conduct of adult life has been attained; this would mean a life sentence for some. Nor are they *contractual:* they do not assure the student any outcome or even any minimum standard of educational service or decent treatment in exchange for his obligation to attend. Other laws, to be sure, do set up such standards, but the student has no remedy against their breach. Even if he can establish that the school is sub-standard and that he personally is mistreated there, he cannot legally withdraw; he can only try to force the school authorities to make improvements which, usually, they would already have made long ago if they possibly could.

From this point of view, compulsory school attendance appears as a gross violation of civil liberty: a bill of attainder against a specific age group that guarantees no compensation in return. The school

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may, indeed, benefit the child; but it doesn't have to in order to earn the right to retain him. In talking about the youngsters who drop out, therefore, I am not going to start with the assumption that they ought to be retained. My hunch is that a large proportion of the dropouts may be doing what is best for themselves under the atrocious circumstances that exist. But I do want to analyze those circumstances, and see why the schools have so little to offer these youngsters.

IN THE SMALL Southern Methodist college I attended, we had chapel services twice a week; and after the opening hymn there was a responsive reading. The Dean —it was a poor school and could only afford one—would read a portion of Scripture aloud; and the students, assembled as a congregation, would read the following portion: his in light-faced type, ours in bold. There was one of these that I liked especially well, and I remember fragments of it distinctly—not accurately, but distinctly. It began:

Dean: *Whereof from a young man's fancy shall he wend his way?*
Students: *By taking heed unto the Lord, and the firmament thereof.*

This responsive reading, in the version in which I recall it, is admirably suited to its purpose. The first line reveals real evidence of poetic influence. It ties in with the culture, showing that we share in its heritage, and it alludes to the necessity for progress and achievement; while the second line asserts the necessity of basing these on a sound moral imperative. By saying it over together we experienced a feeling of mutuality and belonging, of being the same kind. Yet we ran no risk of binding ourselves to too literal an interpretation of its mandate, because it doesn't actually make any sense at all.

For the types of students it is designed for, the public high school and junior high school curriculum serves, I believe, exactly the same purpose as this responsive reading. Its function is liturgical. This is not as true of elementary school, because the basic skills really work. If you read as you are taught there, you will understand at least the words; if you write, your words will be understood; if you follow the rules of arithmetic, your calculations will check out and your books will balance, though you may never have the remotest conception of mathematics.

High school, however, is another matter. What would happen to the businessman, or just citizen, who attempted to apply what he was taught in high-school civics to the actual power structure of his community or his country? Who learns to love reading, or to find the kind of reading he can love among the classics and the bitty anthologies of the high-school English course? High-school history, by and large, is not even propaganda, because nobody is expected to believe it or to be moved by it; it is received as official myth. We tell youngsters that the Pilgrims came to New England searching for religious freedom not in order to give them an understanding of the actual root values of Colonial New England, but in order to provide them with the relevant cliché about the relation of church and state in America, and to let them know that a good middle-class American thinks of "my religious affiliation" or "the faith of my choice." This keeps the youngsters from getting hung up on religion, like an Italian peasant or rural Southerner. As for high-school science, it has, since Sputnik, increased its work load enormously and often tries to duplicate the content of college science courses. But essentially, it serves not as an introduction to science but to legitimate the American middle-class epistemology; science proves that Truth is an aggregate of general principles induced from empirical data that observers can agree on. The function of science is to protect people from odd-balls by setting up the rules so that subjective feeling is discounted. The scientific method, then, becomes a way of separating ends and means. When we want to win an election,

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or spy on the Soviet Union, or redevelop a slum, we go about it scientifically—i.e., by defining what we are trying to do as a technical problem. Naturally, we care about the feelings of the people affected; people's emotions are a very important factor. That's why we have psychologists on our team.

It is even truer than the progressives have always maintained that there is no valid distinction between the curriculum and the extra-curriculum. What counts is the total experience of the student, and what he learns in both the classroom and the playing field is a posture, a pattern of anxieties and a pattern of responses for dealing with it. There is seldom any pleasure in scholarship or ideas as such; the classroom and the playing field alike are places where you try to make it, and learn the techniques for making it that alienate you least from your peers. The over-all rules are the same in both: learn the ropes; don't get hung up; always be friendly, sincere, and creative. And win!

The important thing about this familiar picture is that it is a picture of a totally instrumental institution. Nothing about the institution is meant to be valuable, here and now, for its own sake. I don't mean that high school students don't have any fun. Of course they do; in the suburbs, at least, the high school is a "fun place." But this sort of fun is a part of the social pattern to be learned; being "fun" helps you to make it as well or better than anything, and it takes a great deal of social skill which American adolescents, notably, do learn.

We have never had much interest in what education means and feels like to the youngsters who are subjected to it; only in what it might help them to make of themselves. Even the Supreme Court, in its decision against segregation, could not rest on the moral obloquy and insult that segregation imposes on Negro children; that was not enough. It had to support its position further by pointing out that a major reason why separate schools could not be equal even if they were identical was that the Negro students couldn't make the same contacts there that white students could in their school, and that this was what people really go to school for.

So it is: the Court has done our motives no discredit, but merely reaffirmed our tradition. The public school gives poor boys a chance to develop their potentialities, both by formal education and by providing an opportunity to mingle with and learn from their social superordinates. The commonwealth is then the richer for the skills they later contribute, which would otherwise have been forever lost. This is exactly the opportunity our dropouts need, and which they ought presumably to welcome. So what has gone wrong?

WHAT HAS GONE wrong is pretty complicated; but basically I think one might locate it in the schools' perennial assumptions about the nature of what they have had to offer the children of the poor. These assumptions were probably never valid; but both the school and the poor once believed them. Now, only the school continues to assert them, though no longer with much conviction.

The schools assumed that in order to get ahead in America the student had to learn not only a body of skills, but also a set of social conventions, increasingly subtle and refined as he climbed up the ladder. In school he was taught techniques for handling things and manners for getting along with people. The teachers were the transmitters of an alien culture—alien to them, too. Social mobility was a process like preparing to get a job as a rice farmer in China or a coffee-grower in Brazil. There was a strange language to be learned—from instructors who didn't speak it too well themselves; a strange body of techniques to be mastered—from teachers who had never practiced them at first hand. It would all have to be learned over again when he got there; but at the time it seemed relevant, and made the

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student feel that he was well on his way.

Now, there are three important ways in which this situation differs from the condition in the high school today. In the first place, the problem of dropouts did not then exist. Most of the students who drop out today would never have been in high school fifty years ago; the school-leaving age has risen irregularly over the past decades, and a more rigid and self-confident school policy would not have hesitated to keep students in grade school until they reached it, whatever it was, if they did not pass. A good many of these dropped out, and took unskilled jobs, which existed; and that was the last anyone thought of them till election day six or seven years later. They weren't a dropout problem; they were the working class.

But those who didn't drop out, even though they came from a working-class background, did not feel at the time that they were losing their identity. This happened later, after they had made it, in the classical discovery of the loneliness of the long-distance runner. In school you were still you: *striving* didn't separate you from other poor, immigrant boys; it was exactly what poor, immigrant boys were supposed to do. There was no intimation at the time that you were leaving yourself behind. It wasn't that you were becoming a different person; the old *you* was learning new tricks. Education was instrumental, all right—it has always been that in America—but the instruments were thought to be in the curriculum. The student didn't have to learn to think of *himself* as one.

And finally, nobody doubted what the norms were. It seemed very clear that the people in the next stratum up were the ones who knew what the student had to learn; he had to be able to do what they did. This wouldn't make them accept him willingly; but it would allow him to work his way in even if they didn't.

I don't mean to imply that the school actually delivered the social mobility it promised; sometimes it did, more often it didn't. But this was the way it was supposed to work, and why there was so little controversy over whether compulsory school attendance was good for the individual as well as for the commonwealth. As long as the students who stayed in school believed in education naïvely, it served—much better than religion could have in this heterogeneous country—as the opiate of the people. And opium vendors don't have dropout problems.

APPARENTLY, however—to judge by the present situation—they can: the American poor are getting over their addiction.* It takes more and more education every year to invoke the same dream; and reality breaks through too often, leaving them sick, mean, and edgy. The educational establishment, fearful of losing popular support, is naturally much concerned with the possibilities of a *rapprochement,* of which two have already been tried. The simplest of these is an effort to beef up the traditional, but paradoxically faltering, economic appeal of education. Students are reminded over and over that today, more than ever, you need a high school diploma to get any sort of job and a college degree to get a good one. They are given the statistics on the fabulous return education, as an investment, brings in over a lifetime in increments of annual income. The unemployment data

* Thus, in her recent study of the schools in Big City, Patricia Sexton reports dropout rates even in *elementary school* of 15.5 per 10,000 children from families earning from $3,000–5,000 annually, falling to 3 children per 10,000 for families earning $5,000–7,000. For families making more than $9,000, the rate was less than 1 child per 10,000. In high schools, of course, the rate is enormously greater, but follows the same pattern. There is no high school in Big City whose median family income is less than $5,000. For schools with median family incomes ranging from $5,000–5,999, Sexton found a dropout rate of 19.2 per cent of the total registration, falling to 7.9 per cent for schools whose students had a median family income of $7,000–7,999, and to 3.6 per cent for the school whose students came from families having median incomes above $9,000. (*Education and Income,* Viking, 1961, pp. 97 and 202.)

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on adolescents and unskilled labor are stressed so that the youngsters will understand how hopeless things will be for them if they drop out of school. If they and their teacher are sophisticated enough, the demographic shift in job-type may be explained: how unskilled and blue-collar work has fallen off, while service and white-collar jobs, demanding a higher level of school achievement, have enormously increased in proportion.

ALL this is true enough; but the implication is false. It does not follow that most of the students now dropping out would have a better chance, even economically, if they stayed in school. As S. M. Miller and Frank Riessman have pointed out in a recent WBAI broadcast, the illusory success of some of these school-retention efforts in leading students to better jobs is based on the fact that they made hardly a dent in the number of school dropouts; if the programs had been successful in reaching the students they would inevitably have failed in delivering the jobs. In our economy, the demonstrable economic value of an education is partly a consequence of its scarcity. The blue-collar-white-collar figures are relative, and one loses sight of how much smaller the white-collar one was to begin with. The absolute increase in white-collar opportunity does not compensate for the absolute loss in blue-collar jobs—a discrepancy which is rapidly increasing in magnitude as automation proceeds. Today's dropouts are, perhaps fortunately, pretty skeptical kids; if they all believed that the school could deliver them to a brighter economic future we would soon have unemployed IBM operators and technicians hanging around the way India and Africa have lawyers.

The other, and more sophisticated, *rapprochement* is represented by the Higher Horizons Program, about which I wish I could bring myself to be less doubtful, for it is a program that seems to me characterized by much intelligence, ingenuity, enthusiasm, and sheer good will. Its appeal, moreover, is not purely economic. I understand it to be an attempt to convey to students that middle-class culture, *in toto,* is not beyond their grasp. It can be theirs, if only they do their work. As the title implies, the Higher Horizons approach seeks to make education appear more worthwhile to the student, and encourages him to remain in school to develop his potentialities, by raising his level of aspiration not just economically but culturally. As the boy lifts himself to gaze beyond the slum there comes into view the Museum of Modern Art.

It is heartening to find the middle class so generously willing to share its resources, and, for once, apparently confident of their value. It is also obvious that if the middle class cannot somehow make public education acceptable to the poor on its terms rather than theirs, middle-class dominance of public education—a long established fact of American life—is doomed. But if the effort is successful, it will remind me of a story that a very intelligent, very British, very working-class hospital orderly used to tell, in a sensitive effort to ease his middle-class patients' embarrassment at the services he was obliged to perform for them. This story concerned a small pharmaceutical firm that was facing bankruptcy. It had an established reputation as Britain's most reputable manufacturer of suppositories. But respect for craftsmanship, as is well known, was declining; their customers, apparently, were turning to other sources for satisfaction. Things looked black. Then the firm consulted one of Madison Avenue's most resourceful advertising agencies. And the agency, after much brainstorming, came up with a slogan that at once opened vast markets to the company by motivating the very segment of the population which had hitherto most successfully resisted its appeal. The slogan was, very simply, "If you don't like our suppositories, you know what you can do with them!"

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The dropouts, by and large, don't like middle-class culture; and they know quite well what we can do with it. Dropping out is one way of telling us, and it is about time we turned our attention to the things about the school that are bugging them. The school is the arena in which these youngsters encounter middle-class life; this is where the dropouts fight the ten-year's ideological war that ends in their defeat and rout. In this warfare the core values of their culture and the values the school represents are at issue, and any one that we start by considering will lead to the others. I think the most fruitful might be the familiar question of deferred gratification, or impulse control, which is the source of so much conflict with the school authorities.

We all know the school's side of the question; and know that lower-class youngsters act out their conflicts. Retention programs try to face up to this by helping the youngsters learn more self-control and giving them some valid experience of being rewarded for it, so that they will discover for themselves that certain very desirable goals exist that can only be achieved by people who plan, save, and give a soft answer to wrath-provoking circumstances. In this way the kids learn that there may be more desirable rewards than the immediate pleasure of blowing up and shooting your bolt. "Now, Dionysus, let's think about what we're really trying to get done here," friendly Apollo is always urging; and of course he is right. The difficulty lies in getting Dionysus to listen.

Or does it? Let me return for a moment to Mr. White's account of the 1960 election, and the Apollonian behavior it elicited from the Republican candidate.

> And this, finally, was the only summary one could make of the campaign that Richard M. Nixon had so valiantly waged, under such personal suffering: that there was neither philosophy nor structure to it, no whole picture either of the man or of the future he offered. One could perceive neither in this last climactic proposal nor in his prepared speeches nor in his personal discourses any shape of history, any sense of the stream of time or flow of forces by which America had come to this point in history and might move on. Nixon's skill in politics was enormous, his courage unquestioned, his endurance substantial. But they were the skills, courage, and endurance of the sailor who knows the winds and can brave the storm and recognize the tide. There was missing in him always the direction of the navigator. . . . Thus, it is impossible to distinguish, from his campaign performance, what Nixon's personal political attitude was to the arrest of Martin Luther King when that hero figure of American Negroes was arrested in the last days of the campaign. . . . On the afternoon of the sentencing of Martin Luther King to four months of hard labor in Georgia, the Department of Justice—at the suggestion of a wise yet shrewd Republican Deputy Attorney-General—composed a draft statement to support the application for release of the imprisoned Negro minister. Two copies of the draft were sent out immediately for approval—one to the White House, one to Mr. Nixon's traveling headquarters. No one has yet revealed who killed this draft statement that was so critically important in the tense politics of civil rights. Either President Eisenhower or Vice-President Nixon could have acted—yet neither did. However obscure Eisenhower's motivations were, Nixon's are more perplexing, for he was the candidate. He had made the political decision at Chicago to court the Negro vote in the North; only now, apparently, he felt it quite possible that Texas, South Carolina, and Louisiana might all be won to him by the white vote and he did not wish to offend that vote. So he did not act—there was no whole philosophy of politics to instruct him.
>
> There could never be any doubt of the Vice-President's pugnacity or innate courage; yet it was a pugnacity and courage committed without a framing strategy to make them effective.

The terms of Mr. White's criticism are as interesting as the incident itself. No philosophy of politics? No framing strategy? On the contrary, he was all strategy. What he lacked was heart and a sense of

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outrage: the capacity to make moral judgments. Yet, Mr. White cannot say this because his whole book, though very sensitive to moral factors in the contest, shares the assumption that a candidate's first duty is to get elected. Nixon lost, and the figures do indeed show that his expediency on this issue may have cost him the election. But to infer from this fact that the worst thing about Mr. Nixon's behavior was that it didn't work is to share his posture.

EARLIER ON, Mr. White describes the situations in the campaign that found Mr. Nixon at his best.

> One had to see Nixon entering a small Iowa village—the streets lined with school children, all waving American flags until it seemed as if the cavalcade were entering a defile lined by fluttering, peppermint-striped little banners—then see him stop at a Harvest Festival (in Red Oaks) —where on the festival tables lay the ripened ears of field corn . . . to see him at his best. For in such small towns he found an echo. These people were his natural constituency, his idiom their idiom. . . . He woke in Marietta, Ohio, on Monday, October 25th, to begin his last "peak" effort, and it was clear from his first speech of the day that he was at one with his audience as he had not been since he had passed through the corn fields of Iowa in the first week of the campaign. A sign outside the courthouse of Marietta, Ohio, read: HIGH SCHOOL DEBATERS GREET WORLD DEBATER—the sign was apropos and of the essence of this last trip as he revived. For he *was* a high-school debater, the boy who had some thirty years before won a Los Angeles *Times* prize for his high-school oration on the Constitution. He was seeking not so much to score home a message as to win the hearts of his little audiences; his style was homestyle and during the next two weeks told much about him.

In Red Oaks and Marietta they don't have much of a dropout problem. Good, solid communities, with woodsheds ample to the needs of youth, they turn out clean-cut boys and girls among whom Mr. Nixon is right at home. It was the urban proletariat, and overwhelmingly the Negroes, who refused to take part in his Harvest Festival, though the corn be ripe and the harvest long overdue.

To carry this illustration further would not make my point clearer; in any case, it is simple enough. I think the youngsters who drop out are probably, in many ways, a more promising moral resource than those who stay in, and I think they are driven out in part by moral revulsion from the middle-class life of the school. They could never, themselves, identify their feelings as moral repugnance because they view morality as being on the side of the enemy and therefore square; they imagine they dislike morality and have never been allowed to realize that they have morals of their own. They don't have a complete moral *system,* because they are not systematic; they are unprincipled in their behavior, because principles are too abstract for them to handle. But in a concrete situation they can be trusted more safely than their middle-class peers who are trying to make it.

Mr. Nixon and his silent superior are symbols, too; and I am not naïve enough to attribute the lower-class response to them solely to the revulsion they arouse in the breast of the noble savage. The opposition was well-organized and well-manipulated. But there are natural affinities and polarities in politics that set limits to what manipulation can achieve, and these, among other things, are reflected in the class structure of American society. Officially, American society is, however, middle-class and opportunistic—in the Land of Opportunity these are the values that receive official support and that in fact prevail. It is surely fair enough to take Mr. Eisenhower, and Mr. Nixon at the zenith of his presidential aspirations, as representative of what is most American. But one need not be wholly partisan. President Kennedy has also stated emphatically that we need technical rather than ideological or philosophical ap-

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proaches to the problems that confront us.*

This moral attitude dominates our life. We are caught in it in crisis after crisis: in the U-2 incident, the Cuban invasion, the presence of our observers in Vietnam organizing the forced evacuation of peasants so that their farms can be burned, and helping the government see to it that the Viet Cong guerrillas don't get any antibiotics. Time after time the world finds a nice, friendly American standing in the middle of somebody else's ruins, with no more to say for himself than a rueful "It shoulda worked, but somebody must have goofed!"

I have a name for this boy. I call him Edsel, and I think it is time we withdrew him from production and got out a more responsive and less hazardous model. Even the practical-minded may not have much use for him any more; the locals seem to be getting pretty tired of Edsel and are about ready to get him out of there, with a hammer and sickle if necessary. But if we are to grow anything better, the dropouts are the kids to start with, for they have come part way on their own, against heavy opposition, already. They are ill-disciplined. They have no basic skills. They are so sore that any place you touch them hurts, and when they are hurt they hurt back. They are extremely parochial, limited in their experience of the world to a few city blocks of desolate slum, and therefore both gullible and suspicious about anything beyond it. They are sometimes homeless, and never have any quiet place to study and think. They are inconveniently aware of their own sexuality and inconveniently skilled at bringing it to the attention of others. They live, their teachers sometimes say, like animals; and as they say it, a ghost sobs, harshly. But if these youngsters are trapped, it is not in their apprehensions of pseudo-events. They are not alienated from themselves. They still have access to their sense-data, and, on their own terms, they are accustomed to fidelity.

These are the qualities that, I believe, we hoped to preserve and continually renew by building an open society in which a sensitive, compulsively masculine boy could become an Ernest Hemingway and a poor but beautiful waif a Marilyn Monroe. But at this juncture, less fatal alternatives to mediocrity are needed. Can a school geared to success and social mobility help formulate them? Its traditions are against it, its staff is against it, its relationship to the community power structure is against it.

TO REACH THE dropouts and give them a reason for staying, the school would have to start by accepting their *raison d'être*. It would have to take lower-class life seriously as a condition and a pattern of experience—not just as a contemptible and humiliating set of circumstances that every decent boy or girl is anxious to escape from. It would have to accept their language, and their dress, and their values as a point of departure for disciplined exploration, to be understood, not as a trick for luring them into the middle class, but as a way of helping them to explore the meaning of their own lives. This is the way to encourage and nurture potentialities from *whatever* social class. Talent, and genius, when real, are expressions of individual experience and the inner life. But success and higher status are not the first goal to which talent or genius is devoted—though they are sometimes the last.

I do not mean to imply that I accept Sitwell's Fallacy: that the poor are happier in their station in life and should be left to enjoy it. Most lower-class people of whatever age hate lower-class life, I am sure: the noise, and the filth, and the crowding, and the vulnerability to the police and illness; never feeling quite well or quite rested. Worst of all, perhaps, is the constant din of the mass media—in-

* In the 1962 Commencement Address at Yale. See William Lee Miller, "Some Academic Questions About a New Yale Man," *Reporter*, July 5, 1962.

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cluding the school—telling them that if they were any good at all they would be middle-class like everybody else, and live in loveliness in Larchmont. But the fact that they have reason to hate their life of fear and deprivation does not give us the right to force ours on them as the only acceptable alternative to it. This is something they must work out for themselves, and the school's job is to help them understand most fully the meaning and nature of what they have to work with. Basically, the problem of reaching the dropout is analogous to that faced by the Peace Corps in reaching the peoples of underdeveloped countries. Can we—do we even really wish to—help them deal with their situation on their terms with our resources, while leaving our way of life aside till somebody asks for it?

Frankly, I doubt it. This is not how the teachers I know approach lower-status youngsters. They are afraid of them, for one thing. The principal is afraid of disorder which looks bad in his record and in the records of his teachers, and they each have their careers to think of, too. So they learn early to keep the kids in line; this comes first. Order *is* helpful to learning, but it doesn't come first, it grows out of the common task; and teachers who put it first are not enthusiastic allies in keeping disorderly youngsters in school till a basis for order can be created. Order is not, to be sure, the central issue, but it will serve to symbolize the sharpness of the issue between those whose security depends on the suppression of impulse, and those who depend on its expression.

IN the urban public school today, the former predominate, and I don't think they can be easily changed, within the limits of personality and bureaucracy that characterize the school. If they can be, there is no fundamental reason why the kinds of youngsters who now drop out may not be well served. But this is a big *if*, for the public school, as it is, is profoundly expressive of our culture. And the fate of the "dropouts" is just one more expression of their actual status in our democracy.

The answer, then, may be "No; this plant make only Edsels." But if it is, I see no dropout problem. Let them go, let them go, God bless them. They may pop up again. St. James (or Santiago, as this chiliastic figure is known in Spanish) is not merely more merciful than the school system; he is far more flexible and versatile. He can accommodate a wider range of talent; he has a great Court, as well as an Infirmary, and though no familiar avenue bears his name, he has, like James Madison, been thus honored by the inhabitants of certain cities. The nearest, unfortunately, in Cuba.

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DAN JACOBSON

THE SURVIVOR

A Story

I MET my cousin, Yitzchak, in Tel Aviv for the first time, about a year after the State of Israel had come into existence. He was the only survivor of that part of my father's family which had remained in Lithuania until the outbreak of the war in Europe. At our first meeting he and I sat together on the terrace of a café on the sea-front, looking out across the idle Mediterranean, which flapped its small waves down on the shore and glittered and winked in the distance, every little movement of its surface producing much light. Yitzchak asked me innumerable questions which I answered as well as I could, about the members of the family in South Africa, whom he had never seen, who were merely names to him; but I found, when he at last was finished, that there were fewer questions I could ask him. I knew already that he had been in Israel for only a few months, and was living in an immigrants' camp; that the office in Israel which helped immigrants to trace their relatives had listed his name in the South African Jewish press; that the name had been seen by a friend of my father's; and so—as I happened to be in Israel at the time—our meeting had come about. Yitzchak now told me that he supposed he would have to go into the army. He would like to go into some unit where he could learn a trade—he knew nothing, he said; he was uneducated; he hadn't had time to go to school. No, he had no relatives on his mother's side, neither in Israel nor anywhere else. He was quite on his own.

We were both silent. And I found that there was only one question that remained for me to ask Yitzchak. What had happened?

* * *

What had happened? Yitzchak repeated the question. He swirled round the inch of tea which remained in the glass he was holding, and drank it down. He smiled faintly, and pushed the glass to one side.

He had lived. The others had died. Within a day of the German invasion, he told me, even before the Germans had arrived, the gentiles in the *shtetl* had fallen upon their Jewish neighbors. "All day," he said, "all day they were gathering on the corners, talking and drinking. And then late in the afternoon they began. We were in our house: we heard them down the street, attacking other houses; we heard their shouts and the screams of the people inside. Then they were at our house. One, two, three times they crashed against the door, and it was down."

He spoke calmly, without gesture or emphasis; and he continued in the same way, though there were times later when he fell into silence, staring away with an ironic, withdrawn, almost scornful expression.

DAN JACOBSON, a widely-known novelist and essayist and a frequent contributor, last appeared with his story, "An Apprenticeship," in our May 1962 issue. The present story is part of a work in progress.

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"The first one inside was a young fellow, Peter, who had sometimes helped my father in the shop. The man behind him already had blood on his clothes. They stank: the smell came into the house with them. My father said, 'Peter, think what you're doing.' My mother sat at the table, saying my sister's name over and over—she lived with her husband in another part of the village. Then my father shouted, 'Yitzchak, you run!' and spread out his arms wide, to try to hold them back. I jumped out of the window, into the yard, over the fence. Some of them were chasing me. I heard screams behind me—everywhere screams. There was smoke in the air. And I ran—ran over backyards, over potato patches, under clotheslines, through ditches with water in them. Someone came out of one of the houses and tried to stop me, but I managed to push him over, and ran on."

Their house had been near the edge of the village—"that was my luck," Yitzchak said. So he was soon in the open. There was a clear space ahead of him, then the forest began. He looked over his shoulder. They had stopped running after him. He went into the woods. Even there he could smell the smoke. And he could hear the noise: it sounded like a fair-day, when the children scream on the merry-go-round. He went deeper into the woods. He didn't come out of them until the war was over.

He had lived. In holes in the ground, in burnt-out villages, in trees; on berries, on raw potatoes, on the carcass of a dog, once; usually by himself, sometimes with small groups of other Jewish fugitives. Finally he had found refuge with a peasant and his wife, living in a lonely spot, who had known that he was Jewish, but had taken him in nevertheless. "Not like all the other peasants, who always ran straight to the Germans or the Lithuanian militia —when they found a starving Jew."

The peasant lived in a clearing in the woods, miles from the nearest village, which was itself miles from any main road. He had a few pigs, a couple of goats; he grew potatoes and cabbages and a little corn; he chopped down trees for fuel. They were desperately short of food, of clothes, of everything. Still, it was an easier life for Yitzchak than what had gone before. He slept with the goats; but he had a roof over his head.

WHY HAD the peasant—at the risk of his own life—taken the fugitive in? At first Yitzchak used to wonder. It was true that the man needed help around the place, for he was old, his chest wheezed, and his left leg dragged. After a little while, however, Yitzchak decided that the peasant valued him more for the amusement he could provide than for the labor he could do. Before Yitzchak's arrival the old man had had only his wife to bully, beat, and torment. A strong young Jew on the run, at his mercy, was a welcome change, offered a fresh diversion. He was a humorist, this peasant: that was what had saved Yitzchak's life.

The old man was short and thickset—he must have been very powerful as a young man. His lower jaw protruded and was curved to one side, and his lips seldom closed, so that he looked as though he were always smiling. He had a tiny nose, bulging brown eyes, and a low brow; on his misshapen chin there grew a stubble of white beard. When his chest troubled him he would tear open his clothes and scratch and slap at it, as if trying to get at the source of irritation with his bare hands and pluck it out of himself. "You devil, you're eating me alive," he said at these times, gasping for breath, grinning, scratching at himself spasmodically. He also used to speak to his injured leg as if it did not belong to him, and was deliberately hindering him. "You won't let me run, but I'll stand on you all the same," he said to it often, banging it down on the ground like a club.

That was one style of his humor: the other was more painful for Yitzchak. Day after day he announced that he was going straight away to turn Yitzchak over to the

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militia who had a post in the village. "I'm tired of your Jew face!" he would cough and gasp. "You've grown too fat on my food. Enough! Enough!" And off he would go, dragging his foot, shaking his head, to return ten minutes or some hours later, smiling with that permanent half-crazed grin on his face, his eyes bright and watchful. "They're coming, my Jew. They're behind me. They'll be here soon. You better run while you can."

They never came. But nor did the old man ever tire of his simple joke. And he had many others of a similar kind. There was, for example, the joke about Yitzchak's hidden wealth. It was a well-known fact, the old man said, that all Jews were rich: that was why poor peasants like himself had always hated them. Now Yitzchak was a Jew—but where was his money? Buried and under the floor at home? Hidden in the woods? Or had Yitzchak a few diamond rings stuck up his arse? Where was Yitzchak's fur coat? What had happened to his motor car? Where was his gold snuff-box? How much of his gold would Yitzchak give to f--- the old man's wife? Well, how much?

Sometimes, by way of variation, he would ask his wife how much she would pay Yitzchak to have him f--- her. His wife was an ugly, bony, mumbling creature whom Yitzchak trusted even less than he did her husband, though she never threatened him; indeed, she hardly ever spoke to him. She hardly ever spoke to anyone but herself, even when her husband was abusing her, raining blows upon her, or asking of her this question about Yitzchak. "Pay him, pay him!" the old man cried at her. "You'll get your money's worth. It'll be good with the Jew. His blood's hot—they're all like that. And his p----'s naked. Come on, Jew, show her what you've got. Give the old woman something to look at. She'll pay you."

Then there was the matter of Yitzchak's conversion to Christianity. Earnestly, fervently, happily, the peasant tried to persuade Yitzchak that Jesus Christ was the true Son of God, to whom he should go down on his knees to pray. Not, he would add, that this would help him at all when the Germans came. But afterward, after the Germans had made "cold meat" of him, then his immortal soul would be eternally grateful that he had accepted the one true religion. He would see all the other Jews—Yitzchak's father and mother and all his relations among them—roasting in hell, suffering tortures far more terrible than any the Germans could think of. But he would be safe in heaven. And he would be able to intercede with the Blessed Virgin on behalf of the old sinner who had taken him in, succored him and shown him the light. The old man wept, grinned, and crossed himself at the thought.

At other times, when he and Yitzchak were working in the potato patch, he simply marveled to see a Jew sweat; he offered to cut Yitzchak's throat in the kosher manner; he called his pigs Yankele and Berele and Yitzchak. He also told Yitzchak that when the Germans or the militiamen came and killed him, he would feed Yitzchak's corpse to the pigs. "It's a happier sight to see a pig eating a Jew than a Jew eating a pig."

But he never struck Yitzchak. This was just as well for him, for Yitzchak had made up his mind that if the old man ever laid a finger on him, he would kill him. He would kill the old woman as well. And the old man seemed to know how far it was safe for him to go, and kept his hands and his feet to himself. The decision, arbitrary and irrational though it was, made it easier for Yitzchak to suffer in silence all the abuse the old man heaped on him. However, there was yet another reason for his silence of which Yitzchak remained ignorant, until one day when he was alone in the woods, he suddenly found himself grinning, chuckling, shaking his head, struggling to compose himself and breaking down once more into a laughter that sounded to his own ears as inhuman and mechanical as the chattering of a squirrel or the rattling call of a night-jar. As he

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struggled to still the laughter, seizing hold of his own breast and stomach, Yitzchak was sure that what was happening to him, what had happened to his family, the life he was leading in the wilderness, had at last driven him out of his mind. For the grotesque, unspeakable truth was that Yitzchak also was amused by the old man's jokes.

He lay on the ground and roared with laughter: he saw the sky swinging around him, the branches of trees whirling like arms. He beat his own head with his fists, he stuffed his mouth with earth and leaves, he sobbed with his forehead against the trunk of a tree and sank to the ground again, scoring his forehead open against the rough bark; he lay with his eyes closed, his shoulders shaking in spasms.

Hours passed before Yitzchak opened his eyes. It was late in the afternoon and the woods were still; under a covering of moss and dried leaves, the earth breathed forth its coolness and damp. Where Yitzchak lay it was already dusk; overhead a few dazzling rays of sunlight still reeled among the leaves and branches of the trees. Conscious of the calm around him, breathing it in with every lift and fall of his chest, he remembered his own frenzy as if from days before. He felt washed out by it, purged, released. For months, ever since he had fled from his house, he had been telling himself that he must live, he *must* live, he must live for the sake of his mother who had sat at the table with clasped hands saying *"Rivele, Rivele";* he must live for the sake of his father who had stretched out his arms wide in an attempt to slow the chase of the mob; he must live because he had run away, leaving them both to be killed. Now Yitzchak knew that he was under no obligation to them. It didn't matter whether he lived or died: it didn't matter to them because they were dead; it didn't matter to himself because he no longer cared. Nothing mattered. Nothing at all.

He went back to the cottage, and when the old man opened his mouth in an abusive greeting, Yitzchak took him by the throat and squeezed it until his eyes started more than ever out of his head. The woman sat in her corner, making no move to come to her husband's help. They were all insane, all three of them. The old man's fingers clutched at Yitzchak's coat, his legs kicked and twitched. The thickness of the neck between his hands disgusted Yitzchak, even as he clenched them more and more tightly around it. There was no sound in the cabin, but for the noises made by the old man's legs and those that came from his throat. He was weakening; suddenly his legs collapsed. Yitzchak released him. "Now go to the village," he said. "I'll wait for you."

The old man did not go to the village. He made no more jokes, either. Instead, he rested for a few days, then got up and went about his work. One night he beat his wife because she was barren, barren as a mule. Why had she never given him a son? What was the good of a barren wife? Even daughters would have been better than nothing; then he could have had sons-in-law to help him and protect him. He should have left her, years before; she wasn't worth keeping, she had nothing inside her that a woman should have. He would have done better, he said, to have married a widow with children, or even the mother of a bastard; then he would have proof that she was fertile. Unlike this she-mule, this blocked-up creature without organs, this Sarah. When he had done with her he told Yitzchak that he had said to people in the village that he, Yitzchak, was the son of his wife's brother: that was why no one had ever come for him, though he had been seen in the woods a few times. And he asked Yitzchak to call him, "Father."

"Yes—father."

The old man laughed, slapped his chest, and rubbed his chin. "And you'll call her mother?"

"Yes—father."

"Get up, mother," the old man said,

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and kicked his wife by way of encouragement, where she lay in a dazed, groaning heap at his feet. And they went on as before, except that the old man was subdued and silent for hours at a time, and Yitzchak called him father.

Yitzchak knew nothing of the way the war was going, and could learn nothing from the wild stories the old man brought back from his occasional trips to the village. Where they lived there was only stillness, isolation, hunger, the rare sight in the woods of some bearded, savage figure lurching north or south, east or west. Once a gang of such people came to the cabin, stripped it of everything edible, killed the livestock, took the ragged clothes off the backs of Yitzchak and the old man, but, rather to Yitzchak's surprise, refrained from cutting their throats before making off. The months that followed were almost as hungry for Yitzchak as those he had endured before the old man had come upon him asleep in the woods, kicked him awake, and then led him to the cabin which had so unexpectedly become his home.

Toward the end of an interminable winter the old man's rumors became wilder than ever before: he spoke of having seen Satan in the woods, Stalin in the sky, Germans and militiamen in flight. The horizon gave out noises, concussions, lights at night. One day Yitzchak went out to inspect the rabbit traps he and the old man had set up in the woods; he returned after sunset. The ground was covered with snow; there was a whitish haze in the dark throat of the sky. As he came out of the trees, within sight of the cottage, Yitzchak halted suddenly. The cottage was surrounded by soldiers. In the dim light, they looked like the spots a man might see under his own eyelids: dark, squirming irregular shapes that wavered, disappeared, darted to one side. He could not count how many of them there were. As he turned he heard behind him a burst of machine-gun fire. Two days passed before, crazed with hunger and cold, dreaming when he was awake and waking with savage starts from periods of total unconsciousness, stopping to stare obsessively at individual stones, sticks, berries, leaves, Yitzchak staggered back to the cottage.

He found that both the old man and the old woman were dead. The blood that had welled from their breasts was frozen around them. Their eyes were open. And Yitzchak danced around the cabin, sobbing and cursing and kicking, shrieking at the old man that he hoped he was in hell, burning there with the Germans and Jews, Lithuanians and Russians, Nazis and Communists, every accursed breed of the whole human race.

THEN, Yitzchak said, there followed three years in a Russian labor battalion. At the end of that time he and the others in the battalion were put on a train and sent east. How far east it was intended to send them Yitzchak did not know, and did not wait to find out. He jumped the train, and made his way back to the *shtetl* in which he had been born. There was no one left alive in it whom he wanted to see again; and it was clear that no one there wanted to see him. He was looked at as though *he* were the criminal; as though it were unforgivable that he should have survived and come back.

He went through Latvia and Poland, living under false papers, begging, stealing, smuggling currency and cigarettes; eventually he found himself in Austria. And after living there for some time, working as a day laborer, he at last chose to take the route to one of the camps in Italy for Jewish refugees awaiting transfer to Israel.

That was how he came to be with me now, Yitzchak said. That was what had happened.

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GEORGE LICHTHEIM

THE POLITICS OF CONSERVATIVE REALISM

When a writer of Hans J. Morgenthau's standing assembles three stout volumes of essays,* published over the past quarter century, he places the reviewer before a dilemma: a summary judgment would be almost an impertinence, yet some attempt must be made to come to terms with the author's central thesis. How else is one to thread one's way through the labyrinth of an argument that unwinds at majestic length across the entire landscape of public debate: from the principles of politics to the pursuit of tactical advantages in the cold war, and back again to the general ideas underlying the conduct of statesmanship? The reviewer must take his choice. If he shares with the author an interest in political theory (not to mention the accident of a common background) he will treat this bulky work as a statement of faith ultimately derived from a particular philosophy of history. And it may then occur to him that this philosophy in turn has its counterpart in certain European attitudes and assumptions: specifically those prevalent in 19th-century and early 20th-century Germany. It thus becomes a subsidiary, but not uninteresting, theme to inquire into the theoretical status of these assumptions and their relevance to current Anglo-American thinking. Fortunately this procedure is in tune with Mr. Morgenthau's own approach, so that no violence is done to his work by asking how far it echoes recent European experiences. The "Atlantic" current is strong, and even those who question the practicality of an "Atlantic Community" may share the feeling that diverse intellectual traditions are about to be fused into a larger whole.

Even so, it is not altogether easy for a critic situated in Britain to cope with a writer who deals specifically with the problems of American foreign policy; and the difficulty is not materially diminished by the author's casual acceptance of the need for a supranational approach. For it must be said that on this subject Mr. Morgenthau is not quite consistent. The reader of his reflections on "Nationalism" in the opening volume of his trilogy will discover that he regards the nation-state as a survival from the pre-nuclear age. Yet his policy recommendations are necessarily addressed to the leaders of what is now the dominant nation within the Western alliance, and his explicit aim is to induce the United States to take up positions all over the world which will enhance America's influence, and diminish the power and prestige of its rivals.

The dilemma is inescapable; it can be eluded only with the aid of a utopian idealism of which Mr. Morgenthau is rightly critical. Policy must be formulated by governments, and Mr. Morgenthau for the past quarter century has been addressing his advice to those who may be thought to have some influence on the conduct of one particular government, namely that of the United States. Moreover, he is convinced that Americans tend to blind themselves to the realities of the world, and their own

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* *Politics in the Twentieth Century*, by Hans J. Morgenthau, University of Chicago Press. Volume I, *The Decline of Democratic Politics*, 431 pp., $10.00; Volume II, *The Impasse of American Foreign Policy*, 321 pp., $7.50; Volume III, *The Restoration of American Politics*, 391 pp., $8.95. Set: $25.00.

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place in it, when they pretend that America is not a Great Power like others; that its past history has not been one of conquest and annexation wherever possible; and that it can afford to adopt moral attitudes radically different from those of other powers. He has denounced as a self-evident absurdity the flattering notion that America's past record is somehow more virtuous than that of Europe, and for the present he insists that the only thing to be done about "power politics" is "to live with them and still remain civilized; that is, we must make the best of them" (Vol. I, p. 321). There is much to the same effect in the eloquent essays on "Nationalism" and "The Problem of National Interest" which lend weight to the introductory volume (the most theoretical of the three). There is even some rhetoric about "the territorial integrity of the nation and . . . its survival as a free country" (as against the utopian idealism of the "Atlantic Charter" and the "Four Freedoms") which conservatives will doubtless read with pleasure. Yet they should note that it comes from a writer who elsewhere affirms his belief that nuclear power has made an end of the self-sufficient nation-state as the supreme political entity.

The nation-state is obsolete, and we in the Western world are saddled with it, although it has ceased to protect us. The dilemma—it is not of Mr. Morgenthau's making, but he gives eloquent expression to it—runs through his pragmatic policy recommendations. It is well formulated in an essay in the third volume entitled "Is the United Nations in Our National Interest?" The answer appears to be a qualified yes; the question has doubtless been deliberately phrased to underline the author's commitment to the brand of political thought known as "realism." There is to be no nonsense about altruistic purposes: "The U. N., seen from the vantage point of the United States, is as much an instrument of American foreign policy as are diplomatic negotiations and alliances, and these instruments must be continuously subjected to the pragmatic test of their usefulness for the national purposes which the United States happens to pursue at the moment." A subsequent essay makes the point that "the United States and its allies have a vital interest in an effective U. N." primarily because it is "an obstacle, weak in actual performance but endowed with untried and intangible potentialities, that stands in the way of the Communist bloc." America and its allies "want what the U. N. must want: the preservation and strengthening of international law and order and, more particularly, the protection of the territorial status quo from violent change." This is as much as to say that the West should back the principle of a world authority only insofar as it stands (or can be made to stand) for "law and order": traditionally a conservative interest. From this one may infer that if the U. N. should one day acquire a majority hostile to the status quo, it would have to be abandoned. Presumably Mr. Morgenthau would not flinch from this conclusion: it is his peculiar intellectual distinction that he makes explicit what the policy-makers cannot say out loud, and what liberal ideologists dare not admit to themselves.

If one takes issue with this kind of thinking, it is not for the sake of scoring points, or because one shares the naïve expectations of pacifists, world federalists, and assorted utopians. Mr. Morgenthau's brand of conservative realism is proof against the standard arguments employed by such sentimentalists, just as it is superior to the shortsighted pragmatism of the New Frontier, with its pseudo-toughness, its faith in technical gimmicks, and its breezy indifference to history. Intellect, experience, and a certain ingrained pessimism about men and affairs, combine to raise him above the level where breathless commentators, or self-deluded world saviors like Bertrand Russell, frantically scan the headlines for signs of yet another exercise in summitry. In turning a cold eye upon these trivial excitements, Mr. Morgenthau performs an important and necessary service. Leisured consideration of his more strictly topical writings—some of them known to readers of Commentary—confirms the impression one had on reading them for the first time. Though devoted to the passing moment, they stand up well to the inevitable second thoughts, and their subsequent publication in book form justifies itself by reason of their consistent adherence to a definite set of principles. These essays are lucid, hardheaded, perceptive, sustained by wide reading and

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the constant application of a mind at once reflective, critical, and disillusioned: the mind not of a practitioner, but of a theorist aware of the maze of conflicting and often insoluble problems that dog the statesman's heels. If the tone is rather bleakly rational, that is no harm in an environment where rhetoric too frequently takes the place of argument.

Indeed, there is a no-nonsense air about Mr. Morgenthau's writings which can be appreciated even by the critic who proceeds from quite different assumptions:

> Prestige aid has this in common with modern bribes that its true purpose, too, is concealed by the ostensible purpose of economic development.
>
> A nation may . . . suffer from human deficiencies which preclude economic development. As there are individuals whose qualities of character and level of intelligence make it impossible for them to take advantage of economic opportunities, so are there nations similarly handicapped. To put it bluntly: as there are bums and beggars, so are there bum and beggar nations.
>
> A civilization such as the Burmese, which deprecates success in this world because it stands in the way of success in the other world, puts a cultural obstacle in the path of industrial development which foreign aid by itself cannot overcome.

One begins to see why the author of these remarks is a favorite consultant of Senatorial committees investigating the wasteful use of public funds and past errors of foreign policy.

There is no occasion to deplore either these sentiments or their somewhat authoritarian mode of deliverance. In bringing together his scattered essays, Mr. Morgenthau has placed both the public and the critics under an obligation, for he represents an attitude that needs to be taken seriously. This is true even of his miscellaneous excursions into minor scandals and other topical affairs—occasional pieces which serve to flesh out a body of thought best described as conservative realism. Like other intellectual constructions, this mode of thought, too, has its unexamined premises, and an inquiry into their nature may cast some light on the practice they are intended to support.

II

FIRST THEN the theoretical framework within which the discussion of current affairs is placed throughout these three volumes. Its guiding lines are traced in the more philosophical sections of Book I, and elaborated in subsequent essays dealing with the principles of politics and diplomacy. The political realm—both internally and internationally—is defined by Mr. Morgenthau as a world of autonomous and conflicting power units. The theory of politics has to do with power, as that of economics has to do with wealth. The constituent members of a particular society are individuals and groups subordinated to a sovereign power. The constituents of the international order (or disorder) are nation-states not subjected to such a sovereign. "What sets international society apart from other societies is the fact that its strength—political, moral, social—is concentrated in its members, its own weakness being the reflection of that strength" (Vol. I, p. 55). The term "international relations" denotes relations among autonomous political units, or their individual members, and these units have throughout recorded history displayed certain consistent patterns of behavior, "whether entered into by hereditary monarchs or elective governments, cities or nation-states, continental empires or tiny principalities, ecclesiastic or secular rulers. The consistence of patterns beneath the variety of historic manifestations makes both historic understanding and theoretical analysis of international relations possible" (Vol. II, p. 167). "The dynamic force that molds international relations is to be found in the aspirations for power of autonomous political units. These aspirations crystallize into three basic patterns: to keep one's power, to increase one's power, to demonstrate one's power. From these patterns three basic types of policy ensue: the policy of the status quo, the policy of imperialism, and the policy of prestige" (*Ibid.*). International relations may accordingly form themselves into multiple, bipolar, or imperial systems, as exemplified throughout ancient, medieval, and modern history.

The contemporary crisis springs from the growing technological unification of the world and the incidental disappearance of the frontier between limited and total

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war. The traditional system of international relations has thereby been rendered inoperative, for war—the *ultima ratio*—becomes irrational when it involves the total destruction of the participants. The resultant dilemma points to such differing solutions as international organization transcending the nation-state, or alternatively "the abolition of international relations itself through the merger of all national sovereignties into one world state which would have a monopoly of the most destructive instruments of violence. Both kinds of solutions are supported by the awareness of the unity of mankind underlying the inevitable fragmentation of international relations." If and when realized in one way or another, these conflicting solutions will at last result in the establishment of a supranational political order. There is some prospect of this happening, for the urge toward such an order, "in times past mainly a spiritual or humanitarian impulse, in the nuclear age has been greatly strengthened by the desire, innate in all men, for self-preservation" (Vol. II, pp. 173–5).

The immediate situation is, however, characterized by the unfortunate circumstance that the unification of the planet is being attempted—in conformity with the usual bipolarity of politics—by two antagonistic groups or coalitions of states, namely the Western alliance and the Sino-Soviet bloc. The Western world is held together by certain commitments which it cannot surrender without falling under the domination of the rival bloc, whose way of life is incompatible with its own. The United States, as the leading or hegemonial power within the Western camp, is obligated so to conduct its affairs that its interests are seen to mesh with those of its allies. These allies are for the most part wealthy, industrialized, and conservative powers, as indeed is the United States itself. ("It is a conservative power both domestically and internationally, and must so appear particularly to the underdeveloped nations.") America and its allies are likewise handicapped by their democratic pluralism, and by the absence of a simple message wherewith to revolutionize the backward countries. In this respect the United States is on the defensive, whereas the Communist powers are able to direct world-wide revolutionary movements; in addition, their own internal problems "are more meaningful, at least on the surface, to the underdeveloped nations than are ours." With the best will, aid to the backward countries can only be a holding operation until they have learned to solve their problems. For the rest, the United States "must . . . [wage] the competitive struggle with the Communist bloc without at the same time increasing the risk of war" (Vol. III, pp. 260 ff., 300 ff.).

In order to pursue their task with any hope of success, the policy-makers need guidance, and this guidance in the last resort must come from philosophy, which invariably underlies the secondary constructions of political science—for even the most empirical kind of political thinking is rooted in philosophical assumptons. Now it so happens that in politics the correct assumptions have to do with the concept of power. "By making power its central concept, a theory of politics does not presume that none but power relations control political action. What it must presume is the need for a central concept which allows the observer to distinguish the field of politics from other social spheres. . . . As economics is centered upon the concept of interest defined as wealth . . . so political science is centered upon the concept of interest defined as power. . . ." Yet since it deals with the problem of rational action—i.e., action properly adapted to means and ends—a theory of politics also contains a normative element (Vol. I, pp. 46 ff.). This is important, for political theory must show itself capable of adapting to novel situations, such as the present post-liberal situation, which is "characterized by the interaction between the political and economic spheres. This interaction runs counter to the liberal assumption and requirement of actual separation, which is reflected in the academic separation of the two fields. This interaction reverts to a situation which existed before political science was established as an academic discipline." We no longer live in the liberal age, and its assumptions have in part become inconsistent with the rise of giant collective power organizations—corporations, labor unions, the modern state itself—which tend to unify the political and economic spheres (*Ibid.*).

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What political science needs above all is a firm commitment to "the truth about matters political for its own sake." This truth articulates itself into a certain number of particular truths, which in the course of time were discovered and stated by the great thinkers to whom we give our reverence. "It may be pointed out in passing that all great contributions to political science, from Plato, Aristotle and Augustine to *The Federalist* and Calhoun, have been responses to . . . challenges arising from political reality. They have not been self-sufficient theoretical developments pursuing theoretical concerns for their own sake" (Vol. I, p. 47). New experiences will give rise to new discoveries, yet the old ones are not thereby invalidated.

Why then are we going through an intellectual crisis? "Since in every epoch political thought is but the particular manifestation of . . . a general philosophy, this destruction of the political tradition must be seen in the context of the general intellectual trend of the times. What Rousseau and Marx did to politics, Kierkegaard did to religion, Nietzsche to philosophy, and Freud to the image of man. These attacks upon the very foundations of Western civilization have left the received systems of thought empty of content and, in any event, without conviction" (Vol. I, pp. 2–3). Political theory must set itself the task of restating "the perennial truths about politics." Contemporary political thought is unable to pose and answer the relevant questions. "Its relativism prevents it from raising the perennial problem of the distinction between truth and opinion" (Vol. I, p. 131). There are certain permanent truths about human nature and political life whose recognition is essential to the health of the body politic. It is the task of philosophers to state them, and of public men to apply them so far as possible. This can never be easy. "Of the tasks political philosophy must perform, that of restoring a defective political order is the most precarious," as Plato and others discovered to their cost. Yet though philosophy is too abstract and rational for the contingent world of politics, it can help the actors to understand what they are doing. "Political philosophy can hold up to society the mirror of its ills and contrast it with the ideal picture of health, hoping to mold thought and inspire action" (Vol. III, p. 67). It must not, however, strive to usurp the place of the public man: philosopher-kings are rare; the most one can normally hope for is that the king (under modern conditions the elected ruler) will allow the philosopher to do some of his thinking for him.

That, more or less, is the intellectual framework. What is one to make of it?

FIRST OF ALL, it must be said that when it suits him, Mr. Morgenthau is not above playing fast and loose with his own categories. Thus in Volume III he has a brief essay on "The Revival of Objective Standards," where he gently rebukes Mr. Walter Lippmann for placing his faith in the restoration of what Lippmann for some reason calls "the public philosophy," i.e., the pre-19th-century philosophy. The "public philosophy," Mr. Morgenthau points out (quite rightly, in this reviewer's opinion), "was not destroyed by its own rational deficiencies or by the hostility of the intellectuals, but . . . by the modern conditions and problems of life which the public philosophy, as it has come down to us, is unable to reflect and solve." So it seems after all that Rousseau and Marx and all those other revolutionaries were not solely responsible for the overthrow of the old order. Then again, the "public philosophy" in its Natural Law form (which was really the essence of it) had another awkward weakness: it was an ideology of the particular society which the democratic revolution subverted: ". . . natural law, the form in which the public philosophy has been transmitted to us, has not only been the reflection of the objective standards of politics, but it has also been a political ideology, and predominantly an ideology of the status quo. In other words, the existing political order was identified with the objective and rational order. Yet when the existing political order lost its viability, natural law . . . became a mere ideological tool by which partial interests and subjective opinions tried to establish their universality and objectivity. We cannot forget that experience, and no self-contained intellectual movement can obliterate its philosophic effects." This candid assessment does not leave a great deal of

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the traditional conservative position intact, yet commitment to the *philosophia perennis,* and therewith to Natural Law doctrine, is implicit in Mr. Morgenthau's own approach. The contradiction is not resolved; it takes the form of an intellectual dilemma of which Mr. Morgenthau is aware and which he does not hesitate to admit, therein differing, to his advantage, from other conservative writers who commonly make do with an inferior degree of intellectual rigor. "We" (the Western world) need something like a Natural Law doctrine, but if we are honest we also know that traditional Natural Law has been devalued and shown up for what it is (and always was): the mental counterpart of a particular social order. This is "our" dilemma, and "we" have to live with it.

It is perhaps noteworthy that on this issue Mr. Morgenthau occupies a position not shared by liberal democrats who have accepted the French Revolution. For him, Marx simply continued the work of destruction which Rousseau had begun. This assessment results in a drastic narrowing of the ground on which the modern conservative is supposed to take his ideological stand. How drastic, one may gather from the Introduction, where the entire political and technological upheaval of the past two centuries—in other words, the democratic revolution, taking the term in its widest sense—is treated as a challenge to "the Western tradition"; while the accompanying intellectual revolution—from Rousseau (why not Voltaire?) to Freud—is described as an attack on "the tradition of Western political thought."

MR. Morgenthau, in fact, shares with Niebuhr and others the habit of appealing to something called "the Western tradition" which on inspection turns out to be the conservative tradition. Its chief pillars are Aristotle, the Church Fathers, and the theorists of absolutism, down to and including Hobbes, plus of course Edmund Burke. Among the moderns he includes the German exponents of *raison d'état,* notably Meinecke (who lived to regret his passionate absorption in *Realpolitik*) and his predecessor Ranke, though for some reason not Hegel, from whom Ranke and Meinecke acquired whatever general notions they possessed. All radical thinkers are *ipso facto* outside "the Western tradition." As for liberalism, it stands revealed as an illusion, and for the rest it is to be considered as a middle-class ideology. Mr. Morgenthau says (in an essay on "The Tragedy of German-Jewish Liberalism"):

> The liberation of the Jew was a by-product, and in a sense an inevitable by-product, of the rise of liberalism, and the rights of Jews in the Western world stand and fall with the belief in, and the practice of, liberal principles. For once you assume that men are not endowed with inalienable rights which require that with regard to their social and political positions they be treated as equals, you have already left behind the basic principle upon which the rights of Jews depend. . . . However, it so happens that the philosophy and the institutions of liberalism are not the expression of eternal verities. That philosophy and those institutions arose under certain historic conditions and hence were bound to disappear under different historic conditions. It is not by accident that the rise of liberal philosophy and of liberal institutions is intimately connected with the rise of the middle classes. The liberal philosophy is the philosophy par excellence which expresses the interests of the middle classes, and the liberal institutions are the bulwarks safeguarding their position in society. . . . German Jews, being predominantly middle class in social composition and liberal in political and philosophic outlook, shared to the full the optimistic mood of the liberal middle classes. . . . The rise of Nazism to power is obviously connected with the economic, social, and moral decline of the German middle classes. . . . (Vol. I, pp. 247 f.)

The notable thing about this passage is not its employment of a somewhat popularized form of Marxist sociology (quite common since the early 20th century in the German academic milieu once Max Weber had rendered it respectable), but its unrestrained relativism. For if liberalism can be dismissed as a transitory ideology, there is really no stopping. Yet the reader who expects Mr. Morgenthau to be equally ruthless with other ideologies is in for a disappointment. It is true that now and then (e.g., when it is a question of Natural Law, with its uncomfortable Thomist im-

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plications) he wavers a little. But some things, it turns out, are sacred after all: not only the eternal verities of Aristotelian politics, but even the common decencies of everyday life. The Van Doren case in particular roused the moralist in Mr. Morgenthau, and once roused he was not easily quieted. Let the reader consult his "Epistle to the Columbians on the Meaning of Morality" (an open letter to some students of Columbia University who had expressed reservations about the dismissal of Charles Van Doren from the teaching staff of that institution). He will there find that when it comes to something really serious, such as cheating on a TV quiz show, there is no sterner judge of morals, and none less given to cultural relativism, than Mr. Morgenthau. Van Doren had admitted having cheated, and his university had dismissed him on the grounds that he had thereby violated "the principles that a teacher stands for." To the protesting students Mr. Morgenthau replied (Vol. I, p. 372):

> You must have smiled indulgently or shrugged with impatience when you saw me refer to the sanctity of the moral law. Is not morality, so you might ask, a relative thing, the ever changing result of environment and circumstances? If this were so, let me ask you, how do you explain that we can not only understand the moral relevance of the Ten Commandments, originating in a social environment quite different from ours, but also make them the foundation of our moral life? How do you explain that the moral ideas of Plato and Pascal, of Buddha and Thomas Aquinas, are similarly acceptable to our intellectual understanding and moral sense? If the disparate historic systems of morality were not erected upon a common foundation of moral understanding and valuation, impervious to the changing conditions of time and place, we could not understand any other moral system but our own, nor could any other moral system but our own have any moral relevance for us.

The naive reader may perhaps scent the germ of a contradiction in the contrast between this passage and the preceding quotation, but then he must remember that Plato, Aquinas, and Pascal—unlike Rousseau, Nietzsche, and Marx—are part of "the Western tradition." Liberalism, that is to say (and *a fortiori* radicalism), may be treated as an ideology (born "under certain historic conditions and hence bound to disappear under different historic conditions"); but traditionalism and moral authoritarianism may not: they have, so to speak, a privileged ontological status which renders them immune to the flux of time and circumstance. Like Aristotle's notions about politics, they share in the eternal verities. I am afraid this won't do. It smacks of party propaganda in the guise of philosophy—the sort of thing Burke practiced with such success at a time when the foundations of the traditional social order were under attack. But then Burke was a political pamphleteer, and his inconsistencies may be thought pardonable. His modern disciples are called upon to display greater logical coherence. To do Mr. Morgenthau justice, his occasional lapses from logic occur when he is roused to strong emotion by a particularly outrageous happening (such as the spectacle of a junior academic teacher trifling with the truth), and even then they relate to the metaphysical underpinnings of his system, not to that system itself. At the level of reflection upon the body politic he is perfectly consistent, though this does not necessarily render his thought immune to criticism. The critique, however, must try to penetrate to what lies behind his thinking: to the social reality upon which he reflects, and whose material contradictions make their appearance in the shape of unsolved (and insoluble) theoretical difficulties.

III

In an interesting and revealing essay in Volume I on "The Problem of National Interest," Mr. Morgenthau dissociates his attitude from that of the thinker who has clearly had the greatest influence upon his own theorizing, namely Hobbes. "I have always maintained that the actions of states are subject to universal moral principles," he writes, "and I have been careful to differentiate my position in that respect from that of Hobbes." The evident truth of this statement is not affected by the consideration that Mr. Morgenthau's mechanistic view of politics as a chessboard of predictable power moves does not in practice leave much room for mo-

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rality. A theorist may take a Hobbesian view of the political universe and still retain a hankering for the moral certitudes embodied in Natural Law. The resolution of the dilemma may be found in the Hegelian doctrine that the institutions of society are the concrete embodiment of ethical values which have a claim upon our allegiance: to serve the state is to obey the moral law. Mr. Morgenthau does not expressly invoke Hegel—a philosopher with a notoriously bad reputation in the English-speaking world—but his qualified defense of Hobbes's "extreme dictum that the state creates morality as well as law" is in tune with the Hegelian tradition of 19th- and 20th-century German thought: "Universal moral principles, such as justice or equality, are capable of guiding political action only to the extent that they have been given concrete content and have been related to political situations by society" (Vol. I, p. 106).

One may assume Mr. Morgenthau is aware—even though he does not go out of his way to say so—that this doctrine played its part in undermining the Natural Law tradition in Germany. Presumably he also knows that in the later 19th century its spokesmen displayed a "realistic" outlook which suited the tendencies of the Wilhelminian age and in the end created a gulf between Germany and her neighbors. His difficulty in this respect is that, while committed to the defense of "Western values," he regards the liberal philosophy as naïve and intellectually inferior to the "tragic" realism of Hobbes and (though he does not mention him) Hegel. These thinkers portray the world as it really is, whereas liberalism embellishes the picture by making unsound assumptions about human goodness and rationality. The problem then consists in formulating a theory of politics which will be realistic without being cynical. In confronting this urgent task, Mr. Morgenthau —like every theorist who assumes the fixity of "human nature"—finds himself thrown back upon the familiar dichotomy of conservative realism and liberal utopianism (Vol. I, p. 80):

> The history of modern political thought is the story of a contest between two schools which differ fundamentally in their conception of the nature of man, society, and politics. One believes that a rational and moral political order, derived from universally valid abstract principles, can be achieved here and now. It assumes the essential goodness and infinite malleability of human nature, and attributes the failure of the social order to measure up to the rational standards, to lack of knowledge and understanding, obsolescent social institutions, or the depravity of certain isolated individuals or groups. . . . The other school believes that the world, imperfect as it is from the rational point of view, is the result of forces inherent in human nature. To improve the world one must work with those forces, not against them. This being inherently a world of opposing interests and of conflict among them, moral principles can never be fully realized, but at best approximated through the ever temporary balancing of interests and the ever precarious settlement of conflicts. This school then . . . appeals to historic precedent rather than to abstract principles, and aims at achievement of the lesser evil rather than at absolute good.

One catches the familiar echo of Burke inveighing against radical sophists, and indeed in a later essay in Volume I ("The Escape from Power") we are told: "Any realistic conception of politics must start with an assumption which is the exact opposite of Rousseau's. It must assume that man is born and lives in chains . . . freedom is a condition not of his empirical existence but of his moral existence. Man lives in chains, but everywhere he wants to be free." This statement, though, might win assent from some radicals and as for the distinction between utopianism and practical meliorism, it is not obvious why one needs to be a conservative to grasp the point about the world being made up of opposing interests and conflicting forces. What else is Marxism about? The real ground of Mr. Morgenthau's pessimism about reforming movements comes out in a passage from another essay in Volume I, "The Commitments of Political Science," where, instead of merely invoking "human nature," he tells us what this nature is:

> Why is it that all men lust for power; why is it that even their noblest aspirations are tainted by that lust? Why is it that the political act, in its concern with man's

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power over man and the concomitant denial of the other man's freedom, carries within itself an element of immorality and puts upon the actor the stigma of guilt? Why is it, finally, that in politics good intentions do not necessarily produce good results . . . and why is it conversely that evil men have sometimes done great good in politics, and improvident ones have frequently been successful? Here we are in the presence of the mystery, the sin, and the tragedy of politics. . . .

The quasi-theological tone of this passage serves as a reminder that one has heard similar utterances from Niebuhr. It is now the fashion in American literature (as it was in German literature on the eve of 1914, when Germany braced itself for its "tragic destiny") to describe history as inherently sinful, and politics as subject to insoluble moral dilemmas. I confess to an unworthy suspicion that talk about the "tragic dilemma" of politics will shortly become part of the official cant. How long will it be before our more literate politicians discover the intellectual attraction of decking out their maneuvers and compromises in this kind of language? But let that pass. The important question is this: what is it that lends to this language an air of profundity lacking in the utterances of the liberal school? Why is it that people are ready to agree that talk about the evil propensities of human nature, and the essential sinfulness of "the political act," plumbs greater depths than are reached by the commonsense language of rationalism? Furthermore, what is the link between a theory of politics which makes "power" its central concept, and a doctrine of human nature which asserts that the lust for power is both universal and inherently destructive of human solidarity? Is the Hobbesian view of man and society so self-evidently true as to impose itself upon us when we allow our critical faculties free play? Or is not perhaps its plausibility secured by assumptions self-evident only to a theorist whose imagination is bounded by his own culture, and whose gaze is fixed upon one particular aspect of modern history?

THE WORD "modern" needs to be underlined in this context, for it is part of Hobbes's distinction that he was the first important thinker to provide a coherent account of society which broke with the standard medieval assumptions about the social order. It is a commonplace of intellectual history that he did this by developing certain individualist notions already implicit in medieval nominalism; also that his thought represents a break with the Natural Law doctrine which the schoolmen had derived from Aristotle. It was this which made him seem alarming, as it had earlier caused the outcry against Machiavelli. Parenthetically one sees here why a modern author who constantly appeals to "the Western tradition"—i.e., the Natural Law tradition—is bound to differentiate himself from Hobbes, whose system was subversive of that tradition. The fact remains that Mr. Morgenthau's political universe is that of Hobbes, though he affirms (on what appear to be extra-rational grounds) that "the actions of states are subject to universal moral principles." This appears to signify no more than that we may moralize about them: it is not intended to suggest that the actual behavior of states and nations can be deduced from an effective moral principle embedded in the natural order of things (or the natural *ratio* of men), for in that case we should be back with the Natural Law tradition. It is inherent in the Hobbesian view of civil society that the political order is amoral, if not actually immoral. Its only unifying principle is self-preservation—that is, the fear of death. In the words of a sympathetic exponent of Hobbes's thought, namely Professor Michael Oakeshott (in the Introduction to his edition of the *Leviathan*): "There is in this society no concord of wills, no common will, no common good; its unity lies solely in the singleness of the Representative, in the substitution, by individual acts of will, of his own will for the many conflicting wills."

Is this an accurate account of the manner in which society actually operates, apart from those periods of acute crisis (one of which Hobbes lived through) when it is in the grip of panic? Is Mr. Morgenthau justified in suggesting that a realistic view of the political order requires as its philosophical correlative a theory of human nature which recognizes no effective bond between man and man save that of fear? It should be clear at any rate that even on Aristotelian

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principles—derived from the practice of a commonwealth of slaveholders, armed to the teeth, and ready for constant war against rival city-states—there is something seriously deficient about a theory of politics which reduces "the political act" to the exercise of one man's power over another. (Elsewhere Mr. Morgenthau refers to the unbridgeable gap between Christian ethics and "the great commandment of politics: 'Use thy neighbor as a means to the ends of thy power' ": which, to say the least, discloses an odd notion of how society actually operates.)

Politics has always, among other things, been a means of establishing a social consensus, and a mechanism for harmonizing conflicting interests. It could not have performed this function if its practitioners had not shown some desire and capacity for attending to communal tasks, organizing joint enterprises, balancing individual and social claims, taking care of minority interests, and in general serving (or at least pretending to serve) the common good. A society constituted on Hobbesian principles would instantly fall apart, which is among the reasons why Hobbes's detailed prescriptions have never been taken seriously by any political school (his general principles survived in a watered-down form in Locke's system, but by that time his frantic appeal for an autocratic and self-perpetuating sovereign had been dropped). The Hobbesian universe is a philosophical extravaganza. It is plausible only as long as one does not remind oneself that even in the 17th century it was not in the end necessary to clamp a despotic authority upon a completely atomized society of selfish individuals. The reason—as Professor C. B. MacPherson has recently shown in an important study of the subject*—is that Hobbes had overlooked the reality of effective social solidarity among both the exploited and the privileged classes of 17th-century society: the factor which subsequently enabled Locke to construct a rather more workable theory. Individual selfishness and the demonic lust for power turned out after all to be controllable. The social order could be held together without recourse to despotism, because all those individuals and groups who then counted for something (mere wage-earners were by tacit consent not full citizens) had a common interest in supporting a regime which guaranteed public order while leaving them free to attend to their private concerns, of which the chief was the maximization of economic gain. This could be done even though absolutism had been abandoned. In short, Hobbes—appalled as he was by the birth-trauma of the new order—had misread the nature of bourgeois society, and Locke had to correct his error before the basic elements of his system could serve the utilitarian-Benthamite calculus.

THE PECULIARITY of modern conservative "realism" lies in the fact that its theorists have reverted to Hobbes at a time when even Locke is out of date; for the universe of "possessive individualism" can now be transcended in theory and practice alike. Since he is not a socialist, Mr. Morgenthau cannot be expected to see this. The strength of his position derives from his willingness to dispense with those Lockean assumptions which are in fact no longer tenable, and to revert to the pessimistic authoritarianism of Hobbes that corresponded to an earlier crisis of modern society. But this "realism" is backed by philosophical generalizations which abstract from the social situation that originally attended their birth. Authoritarian thinking overlooks the plain truth that the Hobbesian system was unworkable and had to be amended before it could be utilized. The fact that the optimistic liberal amendments have now in turn been invalidated by the collapse of the social environment whose permanence Locke took for granted, lends a spurious air of toughness to the neo-conservative critique of liberal democracy, but it does not help to get us out of the crisis. At most it supplies intellectual ammunition for parties and movements which expect the breakdown of liberal democracy to result in the establishment of a self-perpetuating authoritarianism, backed by copious appeals to Natural Law and the inherent wickedness of human nature. Such an outcome is by no means impossible, but that is another matter. What must be resisted is the intellectual arrogance of a school which—while it promotes one particular solution—asserts that its philosophy embodies the only eternally valid insight into human nature.

* *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, Oxford University Press, 200 pp., $6.75.

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In reality the Hobbesian view of "human nature" rests upon a conflation of metaphysical and social assumptions: the former derived from theology, the latter projected into political theory from the unexamined premises of a particular social order. Since this order no longer functions in accordance with classical liberal precepts—on this point the new authoritarians are right—the fashionable picture of "human nature" takes on a darker and more pessimistic coloring than it did in the 19th century, when the liberal integration was fully effective. Yet conservative authoritarianism is still tied to the particular social situation which Hobbes encountered when he sketched the first rough outline of his philosophy: the unleashing of uncontrolled private appetites by the operation of a market economy. Its basic assumptions in consequence are still those of the thinker who first laid it down that man is a wolf to his neighbor. Never mind that Hobbes went wrong when he asserted that men had nothing in common save fear of death (today he might add that nations have nothing in common save fear of nuclear obliteration). The relevant point is that he was first with the announcement that man is autonomous and owes nothing to society, i.e., to his fellow men. The announcement was factually true for his own age and for those individuals whose experiences he generalized into a system. Its limited factual truth has always been the strength of a certain kind of middle-class conservatism. Against the liberal idealism of academic theorists, this conservatism stands pat on the discovery that, in a society dominated by market relations, only the independent proprietor is a full citizen, i.e., one able to resist the selfish claims and lusts of other men, and make use of the power of the state (which latter exists for the purpose of protecting the proprietors from each other as well as from the lower classes).

Liberalism sublimated this reality by establishing a kind of majority consensus. When the erosion of the liberal compromise translates itself into the crisis of liberal democracy, conservative "realism" acquires fresh intellectual prestige, and simultaneously discovers its own metaphysic of human nature: why not recognize that men are inherently evil and must be held in check by superior power? We are back with Hobbes. At the political level this is the natural recourse for all those groups and individuals who can see in the present crisis only a threat to "order." At the philosophical level it takes the form of pessimistic reflections upon the eternal tragedy of "human nature": a human nature viewed as a permanent threat to the existence, and the rights, of other men. Having read their current preoccupations back into nature, the theorists of the new authoritarianism are able to present themselves as disinterested custodians of the eternal verities. It does not occur to them—nor to their admiring public—that the very notion of a fixed and unchanging human nature represents a prejudice. If the status quo has to be frozen, we may as well start believing that what the authoritarians tell us about mankind is true, and not subject to historic change. In which case we had better not ask indiscreet questions about the social origins of the Hobbesian world-view.

For better or worse, however, there are two sides to this dispute concerning the future of modern society, and their differences relate not only to the question of what is to replace the liberal-democratic integration, but also to the position of man in society. On this issue, conservatives and radicals do indeed part company. To Mr. Morgenthau's rhetorical question "Why is it that all men lust for power?" the answer is: "Some don't." And to his implied assumption that all thinking people, whatever their differences, must at any rate concede the truth of the Hobbesian world-view, the answer is that it has now become historically possible for rational men to reject the basic assumptions of the social order which made Hobbes's account of political behavior plausible. To do this they need not take refuge in utopia. They need only generalize from their own daily practice, which could not sustain itself for an hour but for the constant exercise of simple, ordinary human solidarity, as exemplified say, in the ability to work together rather than against one another. A social order which utilizes these capacities more fully than the existing one can ever hope to do, is not beyond the realm of possibility, and its attainment is the cure for theoretical dilemmas which at the present level must remain unanswerable.

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NORMAN MAILER

Responses & Reactions IV

This is the fourth in a series of commentaries by the distinguished novelist NORMAN MAILER *on selections from Martin Buber's* Tales of the Hasidim.*

Through the Hat†

Once Rabbi Mikhal visited a city where he had never been before. Soon some of the prominent members of the congregation came to call on him. He fixed a long gaze on the forehead of everyone who came, and then told him the flaws in his soul and what he could do to heal them. It got around that there was a zaddik in the city who was versed in reading faces, and could tell the quality of the soul by looking at the forehead. The next visitors pulled their hats down to their noses. "You are mistaken," Rabbi Mikhal said to them. "An eye which can see through the flesh, can certainly see through the hat."

Reading faces is a frontier art. An honest face may be either honest or a masterpiece of treachery. Consider this: every inanimate form in nature is the record of a war—the shape of a stone reflects the obduracy of the material versus the attrition of the elements. Whereas the meaning of the forms in a man's face or body is more complex. An honest mouth hints of battles taken against everything dishonest in the world and in oneself, but an honest mouth cannot necessarily be trusted, for humans have the ability to displace the psychic war within themselves. A man can influence the growth of his features, the shape of his body, he may be able to transpose the revelation of his personal forms from the surface of his skin to the function of his organs. An actor can cultivate an honest mouth and suffer in exchange a bad digestive system. An honest man can let his mouth go slack in order to protect the well-being of his stomach. The art of reading faces depends on more than an instinct for the language of forms; one must also be able to sense the dialectic between a face, a temporary mood, and the formal character of the man before one. It is this instinct upon which Mikhal was obviously depending. So a hat could bother him little. Obviously, he would "see *through* the flesh."

*The Story of the Cape***

A woman came to Rabbi Israel, the maggid of Koznitz, and told him, with many tears, that she had been married a dozen years and still had not borne a son. "What are you going to do about it?" he asked her. She did not know what to say.

"My mother," so the maggid told her, "was aging and still had no child. Then she heard that the holy Baal Shem was stopping over in Apt in the course of a journey. She hurried to his inn and begged him to pray she might bear a son. 'What are you willing to do about it?' he asked. 'My husband is a poor book-binder,' she replied, 'but I do have one fine thing I shall give to the rabbi.' She went home as fast as she could and fetched her good cape, her 'Katinka,' which was carefully stowed away in a chest. But when she returned to the inn with it, she heard that the Baal Shem had already left for Mezbizh. She immediately set out after him and since she had no money to ride, she

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* Published by Schocken Books. Volume I: *The Early Masters,* Volume II: *The Later Masters.* Each volume cloth $4.50, paperback $1.65.

† *The Early Masters,* p. 142.

** *The Early Masters,* p. 286.

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walked from town to town with her 'Katinka' until she came to Mezbizh. The Baal Shem took the cape and hung it on the wall. 'It is well,' he said. My mother walked all the way back, from town to town, until she reached Apt. A year later, I was born."

"I, too," cried the woman, "will bring you a good cape of mine so that I may get a son."

"That won't work," said the maggid. "You heard the story. My mother had no story to go by."

One could use that anecdote as an introduction to *An Intelligent Woman's Guide to Existentialism.* Death, despair, and dread, intimations of nothingness, the mystery of mood, and the logic of commitment have been the central preoccupations of the existentialists. In this country, there has been a tendency to add our American obsession with courage and sex. These concerns are the no-man's-land of philosophy. Insubstantial, novelistic, too intimate for the coiled cosmological speculations of metaphysics, irrational and alien to the classical niceties of ethics, utter anathema to the post-Logical Positivists of Oxford, existentialism remains nonetheless the one non-sterile continuation open to modern philosophy, for it is the last of the humanisms, it has not given its unconditional surrender to science.

The existential premise in "The Story of the Cape" is that we learn only from situations in which the end is unknown. As an epistemological scheme it suggests that man learns more about the nature of water by jumping into the surf than by riding a boat. Certainly he learns more about the nature of water if he comes close to drowning. Restated in a framework of Zen, one might say that the nature of experience is comprehended to the degree it is seen in purity, in the purity of no concept. A career soldier, armed with the professional necessity to be brave, can go through combat without ever entering an existential moment. His duty is simple. It is to fight until he dies or wins. It is only if he goes through enough combat to exhaust the concept of his duty and is thus reduced to a man who may either have the will to continue or the desire to quit, that he will have then entered the existential terrain where one discovers authenticity in one's desires. Such situations were at the heart of Hemingway's work until *The Old Man and the Sea,* which permits no existential moment for the fisherman: the old man is never reduced to the point of debating whether to let the big fish go.

The logic in searching for extreme situations, in searching for one's authenticity, is that one burns out the filament of old dull habit and turns the conscious mind back upon its natural subservience to the instinct. The danger of civilization is that its leisure, its power, its insulation from nature, so alienate us from instinct that our consciousness and our habits take on an autonomy which may censor even the most necessary communication between mind and instinct. For consciousness, once it is alienated from instinct, begins to construct its intellectual formulations over a void. The existential moment, by demanding the most extreme response in the protagonist, tends to destroy psychotic autonomies in the mind—since they are unreal, they give way first—one is returned closer to the reality of one's personal strength or weakness. The woman in search of a child goes on a pilgrimage in which her end is unknown—she may find the Baal Shem or she may not, but her commitment is complete, and the suggestion intrudes itself that on the long miles of her march, her mind, her habits, and her body were affected sufficiently to dissolve the sterilities of her belly and prepare her for a child.

Her commitment created her new condition. In giving herself to a concept outside herself, the experience she encountered was able to change her. The second woman having heard the story was trying to cheat an existential demand. She was looking not for commitment but obedience to a precedent. And precedent is the spine of all consciousness which is constructed upon a void. Precedent, it can be said, is the description of an event which occurred in the past, and has therefore altered the present in such a way that the same event could not take place again.

*Knowledge**

They say that in his youth, Rabbi Israel studied eight hundred books of the Kabbalah. But the first time he saw the maggid of Mezritch face to face, he instantly knew that he knew nothing at all.

* *The Early Masters,* p. 287.

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Doctors, Lawyers & Other TV Heroes

HARRIS DIENSTFREY

TELEVISION DRAMA lately has developed a new kind of hero, the professional man. He appears several times a week in a variety of forms: as a member of the medical profession (*Ben Casey, Dr. Kildare,* and *The Nurses*), as a lawyer (*The Defenders*), even as a plainclothes police detective (*Naked City*). This last occupation, plainclothes detective, may seem out of place. Usually, it is not considered a profession, and it certainly does not have the social esteem of medicine or law. On television, however, the behavior of the police detective is rooted in a skill and an ethic no less studiously acquired or punctiliously honored than those of a doctor or lawyer. Doctor Kildare himself once remarked that both policemen and doctors work long hours and drink lots of black coffee. (To this select list of professionals, educators may be pleased to note, television will add a high-school teacher in the fall.)

These characters have much more in common than a particular type of work; they have the same unswerving attitude toward public service. Whatever their individual skills, all of them turn out to have only one goal: to help their fellows.

It is television's pleasant conceit that no professional ever concerns himself with questions of personal gain or advancement. Thus, the doctors Casey and Kildare, as well as their cross-network assistants, the nurses, all work endlessly in public city hospitals, and give no thought to establishing a more lucrative private practice. Similarly, the only interest of the detectives on *Naked City* is to maintain law and order in the streets and homes of New York. The lawyers on *The Defenders,* it happens, do work for themselves. Yet they, like their clients, make mention of fees so rarely it might almost be an obscenity. In short, television's professionals are supreme exemplars of moral rectitude and public devotion. They are urban watchdogs who keep crime, injustice, and illness (and, beginning in the fall, ignorance) ruthlessly checked.

Not too surprisingly, most of these professionals, on the basis of their appearance at least, are Protestant Americans of long lineage—the source, as it were, of their confident and selfless morality. The main characters of *The Defenders,* for example, a father and son law team, Lawrence and Kenneth Preston by name, impress one as being descendants of men who helped devise a legal basis for the Revolutionary War. Similarly, one suspects that the ancestors of Dr. Kildare and his mentor, Dr. Gillespie, landed at Plymouth Rock.

The only obvious exceptions to this oligarchy of Protestant professionals are the two main characters of *Ben Casey.* The older of the two men, Dr. Zorba, played by Sam Jaffe, looks as if he still knows several comic and touching stories about life on New York's Lower East Side, and even a few sadder, more painful ones about the Old Country as well. As for Dr. Ben himself, played by a swarthy and muscular star named Vincent Edwards, this young neurosurgeon seems to have been raised on healthy portions of pasta—his Irish-sounding name notwithstanding—and probably experienced in his youth the kind of difficult times that

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James Kildare only read about, say, in the weekly farm journal. (Edwards strengthens this impression by playing Casey rather as if the doctor were one of those burly Hollywood Italian hoods who needed at least seventeen slugs in his chest to drop him. Perhaps the snarl does not exhaust Edwards's mimetic talent; on *Ben Casey,* however, it comes close.)

In terms of their general attitudes, though, Zorba and Casey—whatever the latter's specific background—are essentially the sort of first- and second-generation Americans who practice the ways of their chosen land even more vigorously than do the natives themselves, though perhaps not so calmly. Late-comers, they make up for their tardiness by the force of their persuasion.

As may already be clear, most of the professional dramas revolve around not one but two professionals: a neophyte of great impulsiveness and an older and sagacious mentor who keeps him on the difficult path of righteousness—professional, moral, or any other: on these programs, they are as one super highway.

During the days of Hollywood's original *Dr. Kildare* series, it is worth recalling, the teacher-disciple relationship was a good deal different. Then, it was always Kildare who had to correct the social and disciplinary blunders of his guide, Dr. Gillespie, a *medical* genius but also an old curmudgeon for whom tact and good form and hospital discipline were beneath contempt. Not so on television. Here, the blunders are all Kildare's. Moreover, Gillespie is no longer a genius, but rather Blair General Hospital's Chief of Staff; and to him the things that matter are tact and good form and hospital discipline. To imagine a television situation in which Gillespie had actually erred, and had to be corrected by Kildare no less, is rather like imagining Job giving God a box on the ears, and telling Him to cut out the nonsense.

A typical episode of the professional dramas goes as follows. The neophyte, at work on a case—medical, legal, or criminal—shows signs of breaking an important rule of the profession. In some instances, he is unaware of the rule; in others, he misunderstands the reason for its existence. In either case, the mentor explains that all rules exist for fundamentally one reason: to effect the greatest good for the greatest number. If a rule is broken, the mentor warns, then only disaster can follow, and it will fall not so much on the neophyte—that, after all, is *his* business—but on the very people the latter is trying to help. But the neophyte is headstrong, and willfully plunges over the edge of the precipice. A life is lost, or nearly so; people suffer; chaos looms. But like God, the mentor passes his arms over the angry waters. The suffering ceases; tranquillity is restored; the system of public good that has been threatened with disruption resumes its dauntless efficiency. Still, the neophyte has been humbled and dismayed by the near disaster. A few consoling words from his good superior heal the wound but carefully mark its place: that's one transgression he won't commit again. The true lesson truly learned, all's well once more with the world.

Within this basic pattern there are of course variations. When the improper behavior of the neophyte is actually a crime—like euthanasia—or a gross social sin—like racial prejudice—then, as one might expect, the young main character is not its perpetrator. In these cases, the evil-doer is one of his confrères, never to be seen on the series again, from whom he learns by proxy.

Two SERIES have their own special variations. *The Defenders* mutes the theme of learning by one's mistakes and rarely has the episodes turn on the son's blunders. Yet it is clear enough that Kenneth Preston is engaged in a learning process nonetheless. Following in his father's footsteps, he is obviously being shown the true way by the old man. Often, in fact, it is Kenneth's role to recall to his father the lessons which the latter taught him but has momentarily forgotten in the heat of a case. On *The Defenders,* the son is sometimes father to the man.

Ben Casey diverges from the basic pattern in a different way, and apparently for nondramatic reasons. From internal evidence, it would seem that Vincent Edwards commands enough control over the program to prevent Casey's sweet-tempered superior, Dr. Zorba, from delivering more than the most modest and tentative advice to his putative protégé. In any case, when Casey does get advised, he either glowers or

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mutters sarcastically, "Well, thanks. You've been a *great* help." (To himself, Edwards always seems to be saying: "You big-mouthed runt!") Nevertheless, the true nature of things does out. However much the program substantively underplays Casey and Zorba's pupil-teacher relationship, each episode still contains a brief, curt confrontation when the two men discuss the going problem of the week. On television's professional dramas, young men may be strong, but it is the old men who are wise; and finally, not even Ben Casey can say no.

In their innocence and impulsiveness, the neophytes are liable to commit two sorts of errors. For one thing, they often give way to their feelings. In the bleak judgment of their supervisors, the young professionals become "involved"—they develop, that is, a strong emotional relationship with the people they are trying to help. Whether the particular emotion is admirable or reprehensible is of no consequence. Feeling itself is the sin. In one episode from *Dr. Kildare,* an intern turns out to be racially prejudiced; in another, Kildare himself comes to believe in the adulation of two thankful parents whose daughter's life he has helped save; on another program, *The Nurses,* a nurse is in love with a patient dying of cancer. In all three instances, though the respective emotions range from hate through egotism to love, the result is equally disastrous. The intern, overpowered by his aversion, almost kills one patient deliberately and comes close to losing another accidentally; Kildare, for fear of losing the praise of the parents, fails to explain that their daughter might have a relapse, and as a consequence the girl dies; and the nurse, unable to bear the continual suffering of the man she loves, is brought to a point where she willfully kills him.

On all these programs, then, strong feeling is as incompatible with sound professional judgment as licentiousness is with chastity. On *The Defenders,* a college athlete who admits to shaving points in basketball games exclaims to the older lawyer, "What you must think of me now, Mr. Preston!" Preston replies calmly and almost automatically, "I don't think anything of you. I gave up being judge and jury a long time ago. My only job is to defend you." From this statement, one knows at once that Preston is a first-rate professional. Like all the wise men of these dramas, he effects the greatest good for the greatest number by ascetically weaning himself of passion.

The second type or error which the neophyte commits is more grievous than a mere professional sin; it is a social one as well. In his innocence, he often fails to perceive what society demands of him in the way of general obedience. This issue usually becomes explicit when the neophyte is forced to see some of his ordinary professional activity as part of a larger social process. The young detective on *Naked City,* Adam Flint, is asked to be a witness at the execution of an admittedly brutal murderer he helped capture, and he suddenly begins to wonder about the necessity for capital punishment. Similarly, when Dr. Kildare is assigned to his hospital's jail ward, whose patients are released to the police as soon as they are well, he begins to wonder whether society perhaps treats criminals too harshly: aren't they human too? In more general terms, the question that troubles the young professionals is: what must society demand from its citizens to be secure? How far should society allow itself to be defied with impunity?

On most of the programs—the single exception is *The Defenders*—the answer turns out to be: not by one inch. The neophytes at first do not want to believe this, but circumstances, as it were, prevail. The man in the jail ward whom Kildare treats humanely then tries to escape and in the process shoots two people. This isn't exactly Kildare's fault, but it needs no prophet to divine the handwriting on the wall. Society, like the older professional, knows best, and neither should be crossed. Adam Flint's superior, Lt. Mike Parker, explains the basic point rather well when he sees that Flint is disturbed by the prospect of attending an execution: "You intellectuals always worry about society's responsibility to the individual. But what about the individual's responsibility to society? If some higher court decides that society has the right to take a man's life in exchange for the pleasure he got out of running amuck for an hour or two, that's all there is to it!" And this, presumably, is among the many lessons Flint learns by forcing himself to sit through the

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execution.* Although the entire episode repeatedly emphasizes the intense psychic and emotional pain that the execution visits upon everyone connected with it, Flint somehow comes out of the death house miraculously made a better man by what he has seen. His initial qualms have been forgotten, apparently swept away like so much dust on the wind of his transforming experience. As Lt. Parker explains: "That's all there is to it!"

On *The Defenders,* though, there is a good deal more. Although the Prestons are as devoted to the security of society as are their medical and police counterparts, they see the basis of that security in essentially different terms. In an episode that might be taken as a direct answer to both the jail ward and death house stories, the Prestons go before a board of appeal to ask that the death sentence of a convicted murderer be commuted to life imprisonment. The man has, through a variety of unspecified circumstances, managed to receive stays of his execution for some seven years, and during this time, the Prestons insist (and manage rather sloppily to prove), he has been rehabilitated. They argue that society therefore cannot reasonably continue to demand that their client pay with his own life for one he took seven years ago; he is now a different man and deserves to live. After deliberation, the board of appeal agrees and commutes the sentence to life imprisonment. In short, according to *The Defenders,* it is worthwhile to treat prisoners well; rehabilitation does work. What's more, society's responsibility to an individual does not end once and for all when he violates one of its rules.

THE general social philosophy of *The Defenders* differs from that of its companion programs on two counts. For one thing, the scale on which it balances the freedom of the individual against the security of society is weighted toward the individual's side. Unlike any of the other professional dramas mentioned here, the program is explicitly and seriously against capital punishment and censorship, and ardently for free speech—even, among other things, the right to be an atheist. (To defend an atheist on a mass medium, as the Prestons have done—an atheist who was a teacher, moreover—is rather brave. As Samuel Stouffer's well-known study, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties,* revealed, popular opinion dislikes atheists even more than Communists. Also, the Prestons did not preface their defense by saying, "We despise atheists and atheism and all they and it stand for, yet. . . ." That's not their style. The Prestons really are liberals.)

Moreover, *The Defenders* is the only one of the professional dramas to imply that an absolute harmony between man and society is not necessarily in the nature of things. On the contrary, the program suggests that the interests of man and society inevitably diverge and conflict, and that the differences must always be freshly resolved. The magic word on *The Defenders,* then, is not obedience—the order of the day when society knows best—but reason—which is what one must use when the best can never be known with certainty.

Still, the men who preach reason and those who preach obedience on television's professional dramas are Siamese twins beneath their contrasting verbiage, tied together by their absolute conviction that they know what is right. Regardless of social orientation, they are all judge, secular priest, and transcendent boy scout rolled into one. Moreover, to all of them, the Good Life is equally a useful one, and wherever

* *Naked City,* I should note, is one of the most imaginatively produced dramatic series on television. It is filmed entirely on location in and around New York, and a proper measure of its over-all style is the fact that its acting and dialogue never seem awkward or out of place. The death house episode (set in an actual prison), its ideology aside, offers a particularly good example of the program's attempt to explore the possibilities of its medium. In one scene, Adam Flint, awaiting the appearance of the condemned murderer, is shown gripping the edge of the small rail that separates the witnesses from the electric chair. The camera focuses on his hands, then suddenly pulls away to reveal Flint on a roller coaster heading down a steep incline; his hands are holding the car rail in the same tight grip. The scene lasts for perhaps half a minute, certainly no more, and then the camera cuts back to Flint nervously waiting in the execution chamber. Neither he nor anyone else attempts to explain the visual point by mentioning the queasiness of his stomach. This is the sort of off-beat risk *Naked City* often takes. Even when such risks are not successful, as in this case, they still represent a tendency toward experimentation that few programs on television now share.

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the road to social well-being leads, there runs the only road they will follow. In short, without the professional, Chaos and Old Night would rule the world again.

WHICH does something to explain why watching these programs can often be an extremely dispiriting experience. Part of the trouble is their authoritarianism, which is less a matter of specific issues than of general approach. Except in the case of *The Defenders* (which suffers from self-righteousness rather than authoritarianism), when society says No—as it does, for example, in the instances of euthanasia, abortion, and prejudice—then an individual is not allowed to say Yes. Conversely, when society says Yes —as it does, for example, in the instance of capital punishment—the judgment thereby outlaws the possibility that any decent man might say No. This is a depressing arrangement, whatever the issues involved.

Nothing, for example, could theoretically be more commendable than that such programs should take a stand against prejudice. What happens, though, is that they do not finally score prejudice because it happens to be a stupid and arrogant form of social cruelty, but merely because it is another example of social disobediance. They condemn it not because it is wrong, but because it smacks of individual rebellion, which, to most of the professional dramas, is a disease of incalculable harm they seem to have sworn a solemn oath to root out.

What is equally dismaying about these programs is the patent dishonesty with which they fashion the positions they oppose. In this regard, *The Defenders* is as culpable as any of the series, and possibly more so. All of them without exception load the intellectual and dramatic dice shamelessly. They put the losing arguments, hopelessly undeveloped, into the mouths of puppets verging on apoplexy; then, with calm aplomb, they proceed to demolish one straw man after another, all the while suggesting that each had been somewhat more formidable to overcome than the Colossus of Rhodes. The programs cheat, in short, and act as if they do not. As with their authoritarianism, such dishonesty also has nothing to do with particular issues. To compare *The Defenders'* attack on censorship, say, with *Naked City's* defense of capital punishment is like comparing a pair of separately made counterfeit bills.

Obviously, though, such a dissatisfied response to the professional dramas can hardly be typical. Otherwise, the professionals would not now be joining the Westerner, the gangster, and the private eye in the mass media's Hall of Fame. There are two main sources for the popularity of the professional dramas. The first, and less important of the two, centers on the particular type of social concerns that their main characters confront almost weekly, concerns like capital punishment, abortion, euthanasia, criminal rehabilitation, and free speech—a complete list would read like the table of contents for a high-school text on "modern problems." Now, none of the programs conceives of such problems as political issues, but rather as moral ones. (Politics is the one subject which appears to be anathema to the professional dramas and which, in any case, generally seems reserved for television's Sunday forums.) What the programs reach toward—or, rather, hover in the general vicinity of—are those principles which define for an individual his role as a social being and his duties as a member of the community. In effect, the problems of the professional dramas raise the sort of issues and concerns that were raised, for example, by the attitudes of the Newburgh city officials toward the distribution of the city's relief payments; and they are fascinating for the same reason. The Newburgh incident captured the public imagination because the distribution of relief provided a dramatic frame for the larger, more troublesome, and, at the moment, much-discussed question of who, in the public realm, owes what to whom. In a somewhat less intense way, the weekly problems of television's professional dramas ask precisely the same question.

But this element of the programs is only the frosting. The cake, the more significant reason for the programs' popularity, is the image of contemporary life and society that finally emerges from behind their weekly crises and torments. For in the midst, as it were, of the urban jungle—and usually in one of its bureaucracies—the professional dramas are matter-of-factly able to uncover all the signs of a healthy, serene, and ongoing community. Where others mainly have

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seen the ravages of anomie, they find a plenitude of well-being.

There is, first of all, the work of their main characters. Who, these days, is not well-versed in the scriptures and experiences concerning the discontents of contemporary work? But on these programs one finds men in the very bosom of the city pursuing occupations that provide them with nothing but the deepest satisfaction. "I'm a detective," Adam Flint soberly explains in rejecting a job whose pay would reduce his weekly salary of $128 (and some cents) to idle spending money. His succinct comment says everything: this work is *me,* it's my life. The Prestons might have said the same; so might nurses Liz Thorpe and Gail Lucas; or Doctors Kildare, Gillespie, Casey, and Zorba. And at one time or another, they probably have. It is in their work that all alike find their identity.

They do so, in large part, because they know that without such work the quality of everyday life would plummet, society would flounder. Their jobs, in short, are the best of all possible jobs: they offer both inner meaning and public worth. Television's city-dwelling professionals thus serve as living proof that work in the modern world can be beautiful.

In their attitudes and general principles, they also serve as a reflection of the attitudes and general principles of that world itself. The professionals of these programs are not only public servants; they are also spokesmen of society, and their behavior reveals the way society operates to take care of its own. The revelation could not be more pleasant.

The professionals themselves are tireless, selfless, and profoundly equitable. They are as likely to practice favoritism as is the Brownian movement to slow down in a slum. The goal of the professionals is to render aid, their vision is social, and their richest reward is obviously the knowledge that they have done their job well. When the public has such men to serve (or defend) it, the fundamental decency of the surrounding society follows as a matter of course.

It follows also from the way the main characters analyze the social problems with which they are always coping. In deciding the right or wrong of an issue, their only criterion is the effect a given action will have on the common good. One knew, of course, that this standard of judgment was considered the *summum bonum* in, say, the village of radio's Dr. Christian (the subtle symbolism of whose name should not be overlooked); but who had realized that it was similarly honored in the world of bureaucracies and cities—in Blair General Hospital, say, or in the New York Police Department?

But perhaps the most satisfying of all the sights of the professional dramas is the sight of the experienced professional guiding the impulsive neophyte. Week after week, the young sit at the feet of their elders, eagerly attending to the latter's ultimate truths about life, work, and the secret ways of the world. "That's all there is to it!"

It goes without saying that there is something gratifying about an image of a world where the young and the old are so united in purpose and belief. In such a world, clearly, times may have changed, but the things that count most, the basic values and ideals, have not. Eventually, one knows, James Kildare will become Leonard Gillespie; Adam Flint will become Mike Parker; and Kenneth Preston, in essence, will be his own father. And at this point, a fresh new group of disciples will appear to receive a still unchanged word from *them.* When such a continuity is possible, the world, at its core, remains settled and steadfast. And this is the type of world that the professional dramas have portrayed. In the imagined cities of their background, the center has held, and society is as society may once have been: whole and full of clear purpose.

Where all this leads is toward something of a much-awaited discovery. In the presumably cold, dead heart of contemporary life and society, television's professional dramas have managed to find nothing less than the pulse of the good community. The living there may have its difficulties, admittedly, but in the end the problems are only superficial ones. For this is a place that offers meaningful work, a public devotion to the common good, and secure, vital values. And in these days, understandably, such a discovery has its appeal.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

"MY NEGRO PROBLEM"—III

To the Editor of Commentary:

Whatever my disagreement with Norman Podhoretz's article "My Negro Problem—and Ours," I believe that Commentary is to be commended for publishing it and thereby helping to open up areas for discussion that have been closed too long.

Like Mr. Podhoretz's ideas or not, approve them or dispute them, subject him and his article to the analyst's couch, the important thing is not the way he rationalizes his experiences or the conclusions he comes to, but the fact that he brings into the open emotionally based prejudices that exist despite intellectual convictions. All people have emotional reactions often hidden and often inconsistent with their verbalizations. Is it possible that we shall ever attain full and satisfying integration without acknowledging—not accepting—them?

This would seem to be the point of this article and I regret that Mr. Podhoretz instead of writing simply of his own personal experiences proceeded to draw from them highly questionable generalizations and by such intellectualization to obscure the validity of this point.

I regret even more profoundly some of the attacks upon Mr. Podhoretz and Commentary for publishing the article. I understand passionate conviction and deep loyalties, but when righteous indignation veers on demagogy it must be deplored. I refer particularly to those who assail Mr. Podhoretz for questioning whether Jewish survival was worth six million innocent lives. A man can be committed to the survival of the Jewish community yet ask the question that Job asks: Is it worth it at such a price? (Incidentally, a question that was never asked of 6,000,000 victims.) High moral rhetoric will not answer the very real problem the article poses. Nor will silence eliminate discrimination and prejudice. . . .

By writing the article, Mr. Podhoretz has afforded us not only the opportunity to evaluate his attitudes critically, but the even greater opportunity of questioning ourselves and the contradictions that may exist between our own utterances and actions. Such self-exploration could be extremely productive. It might even help us to understand why discrimination, however subtle, is practiced today by so many articulate defenders of integration.

Joseph Willen

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

In the dark all cats are gray. So now in the light should all cats be white? You are saying the only hope for a Negro is to become white. It is cruel and insulting to wish a black man white. Think of pale hordes who risk skin cancer and other afflictions to achieve the "stigma" you would wish out of existence. Wish instead, Mr. Podhoretz, that the black man accept with delight the irony of having no choice.

(Mrs.) Zöe R. Sherwood

Poughkeepsie, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

. . . Mr. Podhoretz's experience would seem to be neither very exceptional nor profitable—to himself or to others. It reveals nothing new about the "love" or "hate" content of the racial nightmare except perhaps that the use of these emotive words can only confuse and obfuscate any reasoned attempt to "solve" the black-white problem.

I was born in a small upstate New York town, and on the right side of the railroad tracks. That did not save me from being beaten up regularly on my way to school by a bigger Negro boy who finally solved my Negro problem for me by teaching me how to win by not fighting fair. Twenty-five years later my son, who had organized the first-graders in defense of the Scottsboro boys (he believed that they were first-graders, too) was similarly educated and emancipated by an equally tough and unscrupulous Negro roughneck in the school yard of the Newton, New Jersey high school.

Neither of us hates Negroes as a result of these experiences, nor thinks that as a race they are congenitally dirty fighters. But neither do we love them, nor they us, al-

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though we both continue to aid the struggle for equal Negro rights. I don't love any of the many Negro leaders I have worked with, although it has been my good fortune to like and be liked by most of them.

Again, neither love nor hate will serve to exorcise the racial nightmare, whereas reason and good will can do, have done, a great deal, even in dealing with hate phenomena like the Black Muslims. The latter are unlikely to determine the future of black-white relations, precisely *because* they base themselves on the Hitlerian mystique of inter-racial "hatred."

. . . Negroes can fight for the right to be full citizens and whites can help or hinder them, preferably without the emotional complications of love or hatred. The dirtiness, the violence of that fight then becomes largely a matter of tactics, a clear, cold word which can be reasonably argued about.

JAMES RORTY

Columbia, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article by Norman Podhoretz deserves no less than all the acclaim it has aroused. How wonderful it is that via this article we can "speak from the heart." The only hope for moving out of darkness is to bring light to the dark places within us. Congratulations.

(RABBI) BERNARD KLIGFELD

Long Beach, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's article . . . is probably the most honest, straightforward personal examination of the roots of hate and prejudice that I have ever seen. He puts the psychological realities into perspective by juxtaposing them with his own personal experience. He substitutes truth for glibness, honesty for cant, and his soul for the illogical logic of rationalization. And he is right about the solution; the only way to destroy a barrier is indeed to destroy it. This is a classic essay which will have poignant meaning for generations to come.

(DR.) HARRY LEVINSON

Topeka, Kansas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Whatever may be true of Mr. Podhoretz's problem, our Negro problem, so called, is one of justice and injustice, to gain for Negroes in law and practice truly equal rights. This has nothing to do with likes or personal feelings. . . .

I have worked for equal rights for Negroes all my life. When I am asked if I like Negroes I answer "No." I add, of course, that I don't like whites either. I like some Negroes and some whites, but it never occurs to me to put my efforts at racial justice on the basis of personal likes and dislikes. Would members of the American Civil Liberties Union, for example, put their efforts on the basis of whether they like Communists or members of the John Birch Society?

ALFRED BAKER LEWIS

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was enormously impressed by "My Negro Problem—And Ours." It is the first time that I have seen an article by a white person that was frank, open, and expressed the concern and upset within the mind of a liberal. I think the tremendous sensitivity that Mr. Podhoretz shows and his analysis of the problem will prove of great value to people working in the field of human relations. . . .

O. BERNARD LEIBMAN

Queens College
Flushing, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Podhoretz deserves much credit for having the courage to be blunt and honest. His insight into the mechanism of prejudice that it is "a two way street" should add to our understanding of the issue. That envy as an emotion may take hold of the privileged is a truth often ignored. This is coming to the surface in the relief welfare issue. Also his remarks about the white middle-class liberals are painfully true. . . . And finally, it was refreshing to find an absence of the usual phrases that were applicable in the 19th century. The status of the Negro is changing from day to day. This is news to our sociologists.

The utopian solution Mr. Podhoretz suggests is not going to do us or our children much good. I do not have a better one. What troubles me in the confrontation is that the values and standards of our culture are being further diluted. This is happening, first, because our Jewish intellectuals are not grounded in our own heritage. And, secondly, the Negro leadership is politically oriented for short-term integration rather than cultural elevation and assimilation. Were they to emphasize the latter course it would not eliminate prejudice but would lift a cloud from our cultural and economic horizon.

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Concerning Jewish survival Mr. Podhoretz says that there was "a memory of past glory." However, in the beginning there was slavery, as we proclaim on Passover night. It is the glory that followed a period of slavery that is unique and might serve as an inspiration to the Negro people.

(Dr.) Menahem Steinberg
Chicago, Illinois

To the Editor of Commentary:

To my mind, Mr. Podhoretz's article is a beautiful explication of what has been for too long lethargically taken for granted or left unsaid, if not avoided. My thanks for his insight and honesty and courage. . . .

Jon Aaronson
Civil Rights Club
Harpur College
Binghamton, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

The intellectual agony, the personal courage, and the moral integrity evidenced in the article by Norman Podhoretz in your February edition have rarely been witnessed by this reader anywhere in the annals of American opinion and journalism. The will and the capability to show that popular panaceas may not be panaceas at all, and that our social problems may in fact have no solutions—all of this runs wholly contrary to the purposive optimism of American liberalism. But Mr. Podhoretz, a distinguished editor whose own credentials as a liberal are not subject to question, has not hesitated to take a look without the rose-colored glasses at a critical American problem. . . .

In one respect, however, the situation may not be so dark as Mr. Podhoretz reports, although in a more comprehensive sense it may be even darker. . . . From my own years in the South I think it accurate to report that in that region hatred is *not* the essence of racial differences. On the contrary, the typical white Southerner characteristically feels a form of love for Negroes, whom he has known long and well, but it is similar to the love that an adult feels for a small child. . . . The Southern white loves the Negro but feels that he is in some way inherently inferior and thus is not qualified to join white society on unrestricted terms. The analogy is not perfect, of course, because the adult expects that the child eventually will grow up whereas the Southern white characteristically questions whether the Negro will ever develop sufficiently to be fit for unlimited access to white society. Yet, the analogy holds even here, to some extent. . . . The hope in this situation is that once the Negro has forcefully persuaded his white Southern neighbor that he is not an inferior subhuman creature, something approximating the old love relationship will reassert itself just as it does between parent and child after the child himself has attained adulthood. . . .

The aspect of the situation which is perhaps far more somber than even Mr. Podhoretz suggested is to be discerned by taking a longer historical perspective. In virtually all societies of which we have any record there are patterns of discrimination no less odious than those which we now discern in our own society. Whether the substance of the discrimination be founded on racial distinctions, other visible physical differentiations, economic differences or whatever, it is apparently true that peoples everywhere have felt a need to regard themselves as inherently superior to some other peoples. . . . The conclusion is that even if we followed Mr. Podhoretz's prescription of intermarriage, and even if this eventually resulted in only a single worldwide racial type, people would presumably still find grounds on which to regard other people as inferior and thus to be discriminated against.

If there is a bright spot in this otherwise somber conclusion, at least with respect to America, it may be found in a continuing commitment to democratic values and a continuing effort to improve the practice of those values. Even hatred, fortunately, is an emotion which is not necessarily incompatible with democratic procedures, as long as the hatred is weaker than the commitment to these procedures. . . .

Vincent Davis
Department of International Relations
University of Denver
Denver, Colorado

To the Editor of Commentary:

Mr. Podhoretz's article seemed to me to speak out honestly and clearly on an important part of the problem of racial conflicts and misunderstandings. I plan to use this article in a workshop discussion program of which I am chairman, because it so definitely reveals the individual and personal problems, and avoids the generalization and the stereotype. . . .

I am grateful that he had the courage to express his thoughts where restraint has

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so often been suggested as the safer course. I hope this action leads to a more meaningful approach to our whole intergroup problem in these United States.

DAVID ARONSON
Upper Montclair, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I suspect that the Negro problem of Mr. Podhoretz (and ours) is really one of weariness. One senses a feeling of exhaustion and frustration among Negro leaders, who—at least in the courts and official sympathy—keep winning and winning, at what must be a fearful emotional cost, and yet have won so little compared to what must eventually be won. Historically, many great social and political upheavals have been preceded by corrective improvements. There is no denying that the status of Negroes has improved in every respect. The difficulty is, simply, that having a glimpse of what life can and should be like for them, Negroes (understandably) have lost the power to move gradually and prefer "deliberate speed."

Some great issues are never resolved. They may be modified or cease to matter. . . . To imply—as does Mr. Podhoretz—that we must now all face and resolve our individual ambivalences is to shirk the questions of the day. . . . The struggle to assist Negroes, in one way or another, to achieve more or less equal minority status is the only viable one. Any redirection in emphasis, however prophetic, may prove to be a luxury pursued at the cost of all the gains so far achieved. The question is obviously not that of equal minority status *or* miscegenation. The former is enough to think about and the continued struggle for it can be relied upon to produce its share of unanticipated, related agonies without musing on hypothetical issues which are best left to a future and, hopefully, more enlightened and less scarred generation. . . .

LLOYD KAYE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If Mr. Podhoretz had spelled out his basic outlook in "My Negro Problem—And Ours," his conclusions would have been less shocking than dull. His social ideal is a monolithic national culture achieved by a thoroughgoing assimilation. . . . This is but one step short of cosmopolitanism. To solve the Negro problem the Marxist cosmopolite proposes the classless society. Mr. Podhoretz recommends a monochromatic nation. . . .

The situation of the American Negro is that he is black in a predominantly white and hostile society. His background, neglected by the history books, is one in which he can take at least a little pride. And, if need be, he can weave a concept of *"négritude"* which includes Mr. Podhoretz's contributions of physical grace and vitality. The authentic Negro, like the authentic Jew, does not seek to disappear. They both rest their hopes on integration in a genuinely pluralist society, where the overwhelming majority will regard their neighbors' differences with equanimity, with understanding, and with approval.

NATHAN LEARNER
Quincy, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Norman Podhoretz's solution of the Negro question—and the Jewish, it would seem—has all the weaknesses of utopianism. Before miscegenation can be seriously encouraged, a revolution in values must take place. Otherwise, like so much in utopianism, it is cruel, not at all humane. And to encourage—I should say sacrifice—one's own child is a kind of sublimated infanticide, with the right mixture of pleasure and pain for the parent. I would find Mr. Podhoretz more persuasive, incidentally, if he would lead the way. All this does not mean that Southerners are right in saying that before we propose integration we had better see that its logic leads to the question: "Would you want your sister to marry a Negro?" Certainly disturbing, the question may be easier to answer than we think. Like Mr. Podhoretz's proposal, the question is raised in a social vacuum. Only when miscegenation is normal will the question really pertain to actuality; and then it will no longer have any force or meaning. . . .

ISADORE TRASCHEN
Troy, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

What a fine—yes, great—article that was on your/our Negro problem. Mr. Podhoretz is doing for the conscience and unconscious of "our persuasion" what Baldwin has been doing for his.

GERALD WALKER
Past President
Society of Magazine Writers
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Podhoretz has written of the relationship between the white man and the Negro with deep sensitivity and unusual

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candor. . . . The cathartic effects of such candid soul-searching can serve to contribute a measure of progress in the troubled sphere of race relations. . . .

In spite of this, however, I feel moved to register a sense of uneasiness which the article has provoked in me. True, Mr. Podhoretz has honestly exposed a cancer, an operation which no doubt caused him, as well as many of his readers, considerable pain. But after so skillfully cutting through to the root of the trouble, having sighted it, he abruptly drops his instruments, as it were, and gives in to a terrible paralysis of movement, or at best a strong desire to escape from the scene of the operation. For in his concluding paragraphs. . . . Mr. Podhoretz has . . . called for total assimilation, for the disappearance of color differences through intermarriage. He has also invoked the terrible fate of six million innocent Jews—victims of German massacres—as an example of what awaits a group which insists on survival as a distinct entity; and he has questioned whether the centuries-long effort at perseverance was worth such a horrible price. . . . Without presuming to be "God himself" I would suggest to Mr. Podhoretz that survival, on a group level no less than on an individual one, can be a basic desire, and need hardly be justified. The sacrifice of so many lives toward that end is justification enough. . . .

MENAHEM DUNSKY

Montreal, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Podhoretz has made a moving confession of his early experience with Negroes but he went over the cliff when he said that in the culture of the streets when we were kids, there was an irreconcilable difference between us whites and the Negroes. I contend that not as many as he thinks shared his social trauma.

I grew up in the Harlem of the 1920's, and in my 7th Avenue Arrow A.C. there were Negroes and Spaniards as well as Jews. Our loyalty was to 7th Avenue, not to our color or religion. If I feared and hated any group it was the Irish of 8th Avenue. . . .

In my non-liberal Orthodox Jewish home, I would have been sharply scolded had I expressed any Jim Crow sentiments. . . . There was prejudice in my youth but it was against the *goyim*. It came from religious-survival motives having to do with intermarriage and from the bad dreams of pogroms. It came from an American Christian world which ignored us and tried to keep us in our place. . . .

I recall these fragments of the past to oppose them to Mr. Podhoretz's memories and to remind him and Mr. Baldwin, whose article in the *New Yorker* he refers to, that they have forgotten the lessons of the Jewish drama in America. . . .

Mr. Baldwin . . . says the Negro is sick and tired of the sin of gradualism. But gradualism is a sin only when history is permitted to move at the speed set for it by the majority culture. We Jews have forced history to move faster. Not by assimilating, but by becoming more Jewish; by accepting our identity, not our place; by learning who we were and who we are and letting America know it. Indeed, that is what Mr. Baldwin has so successfully done as a Negro.

There is a failure of communication here. But the fault is the Negro's as well as ours. He has only begun to tell us who he is, where he came from, what he wants. Equal rights are fine, but equal rights for whom? Why aren't there courses in Negro history in our schools? White bias is only half the reason: Negro weakness of will is also responsible.

Assimilation is as bad as extreme nationalism. . . . Mr. Podhoretz has a theory which, if pursued, would deprive the American of African descent and the American of other descents of the growth inherent in the marriage of cultures, not necessarily of blood. . . .

MICHAEL BLANKFORT

Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I would like to add my voice to what I am sure is the outcry raised by Norman Podhoretz's article. I can readily understand why Mr. Podhoretz thought of the child he was when he read Mr. Baldwin's piece; Mr. Baldwin's evident and fierce honesty tempts us all to emulation. All the same, there is a radical difference between Mr. Baldwin's "Letter" and Mr. Podhoretz's "Problem": Mr. Baldwin's piece is interesting in itself, Mr. Podhoretz's only as a memoir. . . .

Baldwin's solution seems to me wrong, but his right to express that solution undeniable. Podhoretz's solution, evidently an official recognition of the miscegenation practiced in this country since Negroes were first brought here, seems simple enough and satisfactory. What's wrong, then, with his "Problem"?

In the first place, it is a pseudo-problem. Mr. Podhoretz's Negro problem is his, rather than ours. His solution, furthermore, is in-

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adequate. Assimilation is not a substitute for social pluralism. Also, it smacks of the conformity we all think we deplore, and suggests that the only way to protect ourselves from one another is to hide in one another. In this connection, let me answer Mr. Podhoretz to say that . . . the ovens of Auschwitz did not discriminate between assimilated and non-assimilated Jews, did not even insist upon consuming only Jewish bodies. Auschwitz was a terrible but inadequate attempt to solve the problem of minorities, in the crudest and most desperate way. White solutions to what white men choose to call "the Negro problem" have not yet reached that degree of crudity and desperation, but the nature of white exploitation of the Negro is obvious. . . .

My other objection to Mr. Podhoretz's article is the standard liberal objection, at which lately we have been learning to sneer. Whites have simply lost the franchise to express hatred of the Negro. We have, one way or another, hated the Negro long enough; even if we have not individually hated the Negro, we have behaved as if we did. Our job is certainly to understand our feelings about Negroes, as Mr. Podhoretz has earnestly tried to do; but we are no longer free to luxuriate in them. . . . There may come a time—soon, I hope—when Mr. Baldwin will lose *his* franchise to express Negro hatred of the whites, or when the social situation is so changed that private feelings, even of James Baldwin, are irrelevant and unimportant. . . .

R. L. COLIE

Department of History
Wesleyan University
Middletown, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I do hope Norman Podhoretz feels better now. If public confession in a compote of sociology, psychology, and philosophy doesn't help, what will?

Oddly enough, I know of a Jew (me) who didn't suffer the emotional and practical disadvantage of growing up in a racially mixed neighborhood. I didn't grow up thinking all Jews were rich either. . . .

Where I lived there were none other than Jewish boys to chase me home and beat me up. I never won a medal for track (which is why I was so consistently caught, I guess), but a kid named Goldstein did once shake me down for six marbles.

So there I was, a victim of Jewish cruelty. Some of those cruel Jewish boys were also pretty fast with carefree Jewish girls and aroused erotic notions within me. Some skipped school, too, and didn't wear scratchy coats and earmuffs in winter. . . . I don't mean to brag, but I'm sure I logged as many childhood hours cowering as did Mr. Podhoretz.

Mr. Podhoretz has come to the conclusion that the genuine, lasting answer to the Negro problem is (I'm not gutsy enough to use the brave word he did) assimilation. I hear tell some Jews have considered that road as their solution, too. But I do wonder if the Negroes are prepared to wait that long. I suspect many Jews aren't. . . .

Mr. Podhoretz is concerned that the integrated Negro of tomorrow may run aground on empty, middle-class values. If I were a Negro I would say that is my problem, not his. . . .

I'm going to go way out on a limb and guess that Mr. Podhoretz's traumas notwithstanding, millions of American Negroes are going to continue to press forward for equality—in jobs, in schools, in neighborhoods, in unions, in every place and everything. No one, least of all Mr. Podhoretz, has suggested anything better for them to do. And when that equality is achieved no one is going to be more surprised than Mr. Podhoretz, for then he will understand what Negroes have been after all this time. . . .

GENE BROOK

Huntington Woods, Michigan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Norman Podhoretz's piece will, I think, give rise to much bitter laughter since it fails in so many ways as a solution (even as an examination) of one of our sorest problems. It fails, I believe, because: (1) it offers only an account of an experience strictly limited in time and space; (2) it does not take into account the hundred or so years of harsh white supremacy that resulted in the Negro viewing *all* whites—Jew *and* gentile—as his omnipresent nemesis; and (3) it overlooks the value of a pluralistic society, seeing, instead, the only solution as lying in intermarriage. . . .

ELLIOTT GROSS

Monsey, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

After reading and re-reading "My Negro Problem—And Ours" I am convinced that this essay too will serve as a landmark in the social essay along with Baldwin's. I was very moved by Norman Podhoretz's piece. And not simply intellectually. . . .

Why envy the Negro his grace, his physi-

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cal skills? Why not ask what it is that prevents grace and physical skill from becoming a general property of the young? Mr. Podhoretz speaks of middle-class, white respectability—what does this mean but being cut off from the labor process, the work process, the creative process, as such? The solution is thus not the direct liquidation of the color line, through the liquidation of color; but rather through a greater physical connectedness of the whites; and a greater intellective connectedness of the blacks. . . .

IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ
Chairman
Department of Sociology
Hobart and William Smith Colleges
Geneva, New York

U Thant Reexamined

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Professor Morgenthau based his rather sharp and not undeserved criticisms of U Thant ["The New Secretary-General," January] on a speech delivered at Johns Hopkins December 2, 1962. I want to discuss U Thant's neglected press conference September 17, at the opening of the General Assembly session while he was still the Acting Secretary-General in the hope that we may better understand the motivations and intellectual derivations of the new U.N. Secretary-General.

Newspapers, by tradition, report "hard news." In the case of U Thant's press conference, this meant those statements dealing with then current crises, so that his philosophical speculations . . . went generally unnoted. Had his obiter dicta been properly discussed at the time, we should not be as surprised about U Thant as Professor Morgenthau seems to be. . . .

I have the official U.N. text of the press conference before me, having covered it as a U.N. correspondent. . . .

One must forgive the verbal dislocations inherent in diplomatic discourse, for there are things a diplomat must say that are improbable, implausible, or untrue. Thus U Thant, having just returned from visits to the USSR, the Ukraine, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Brazil, and the U.S.A., said that he had received "one indelible impression, that all Governments want the United Nations to perform as its founders wished it to . . .," that "the United Nations should develop into a really effective instrument for the promotion of peace and the prevention of war."

"They differ only in the organization and procedural aspects of the functioning of this Organization," he added, which is like saying that Lincoln and Jefferson Davis agreed on the need to maintain the Union but differed over ending slavery. But this is diplomatic language. . . .

He then moved on to define the world today and its relationship to his candidacy. He would consider running for the office depending on "the prospects of my ability to bridge somewhat the gulf between the two giants," namely the U.S. and the Soviet Union. His next statement . . . confirms Professor Morgenthau's characterization of him as "a kind of superego in the conduct of foreign policy." ". . . In the shadow of the hydrogen bomb, we . . . I mean particularly the people from small countries must bend all our energies to bringing about conditions for the easing of tension, for the elimination of the fear and suspicion . . . in existence for so long. I think that I reflect the conscience of the whole world when I say that."

Now, obviously, when U Thant talks about "small countries" . . . he is talking about ex-colonial territories in Asia and Africa whose existence is threatened by the "two giants." . . . U Thant, it would seem, regards himself as the representative of "small countries" (you could fit eighty Hollands or eighty Belgiums into one Sudan), certainly not the "two giants."

A reporter then inquired about Cuba, its fears of American invasion, and whether he foresaw the need of initiatives to safeguard peace in this area. U Thant replied that ". . . my own belief is that the United States will not attack Cuba and that Cuba will not attack the United States." Then an obiter dictum—"Most Americans have been restless for some time in the past two years at the presence of what *they* [my italics] regard as hostile elements just ninety miles off their coast." He recalled that at Communist Party Congresses in Eastern Europe "some sort of European Monroe Doctrine was adopted and reiterated."

"You will no doubt recall that most of the Russians," he said, "also have been telling the world that elements they regard as hostile have been just across their frontier for seventeen years. Of course it is far from my intention to equate these two positions. I am just stating the facts as I see them."

The facts, in this instance, are half-facts since within these seventeen years Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania became victims of Soviet aggression. . . . He said he did not "believe for a moment that it is

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the intention of the big powers to launch aggression," . . . and he called upon "wielders of mass media like you . . . not only in this country but in the Soviet Union and elsewhere to present the true facts objectively and fairly."

The most seriously "disquieting" (to use Professor Morgenthau's adjective) statement by U Thant came . . . when he reverted to . . . what he called "my line of thinking." He believed "very strongly in the Hegelian concept of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis, and . . . in the march of humanity towards a synthesis."

This is not the place to discuss U Thant's understanding of Hegel. . . . But it is from such philosophical pieties that he concludes that because religious tolerance, once regarded as a sin and a crime, is today accepted, political tolerance will surely come.

U Thant then delivered a fervid affirmation of his faith in "parliamentary democracy [as] the only type of society which is congenial to the growth of human freedom, human happiness and human genius." . . .

"I believe in these freedoms but this belief . . . does not shut me off from the knowledge that there are hundreds of millions of people who believe otherwise. I am absolutely aware of this fact."

Does U Thant truly believe that "there are hundreds of millions of people" who have repudiated his catalogue of human freedoms? Or that these "hundreds of millions," whether Russians, Tibetans, Chinese, Hungarians, Spaniards, or Cubans have willingly surrendered their faith in that freedom? . . . And how can he be so "absolutely aware of this fact" when the "votes" taken on this issue—East Germany, 1953 and 1961; Poznan, 1956; Hungary, 1956; Tibet, 1959; Spain, 1962—have shown the contrary to be the case? . . .

As a Buddhist, he continued, he believes Buddhism to be ". . . superior to other religions" but was not blind to the fact "that there are hundreds of millions of people who believe otherwise." The peaceful coexistence of different religions becomes the basis for a comforting prophecy about the course of Communist totalitarianism. . . .

U Thant cannot condemn Communism or any other form of totalitarianism while he is the servant of member nations whose very presence at the U.N. makes a mockery of the Charter. But in equating the "two giants"; in imputing some higher nobility to "the people from small countries"; in fashioning political sermons out of Hegel; in writing off "hundreds of millions of people" as deficient in any desire for freedom and human dignity; in ignoring the imperialist drive of Communism outlined in Khrushchev's January 6, 1961 "national liberation" speech; in envisioning the possibility that the press in a totalitarian state can "present the true facts objectively and fairly"; in saying that everybody, aggressor and victim, has a right to his "Monroe Doctrine"; and in his avowal, as Mr. Morgenthau showed, that the West errs in not appreciating the new, peace-loving Khrushchev—U Thant is demonstrating a naïveté, a credulity, a moral simplicity which can only make suspect present and future U.N. policies.

In conclusion, U Thant said he belonged to the school which maintains that "the United Nations should develop into an organic thing; should get stronger and stronger so that ultimately it will assume the attributes of a sovereign State." The other school, he said, "maintains that the United Nations should be just a forum for debate. . . ."

For the moment, I shall opt for the debating forum.

ARNOLD BEICHMAN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It seems to me that Hans J. Morgenthau's judgement of Mr. U Thant . . . is simply an account of how Mr. Thant's philosophy conflicts with the author's own views. This is hardly an objective criterion. . . .

I feel that Mr. Morgenthau's reaction is a subjective one because reading these same statements of Mr. Thant . . . my reaction is one of accord and renewed hope. To me it is cause for encouragement that Mr. Thant has the courage to take a stand in the middle of the world arena. From this perspective he does not look upon the United States as we are accustomed to look at ourselves, nor does he reflect the image of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as they prefer to see it. . . In attempting to assess the ability of a man to play the role of the U.N.'s Secretary-General, the capacity to be autonomous would seem an important qualification. . . .

(MRS.) ELIZABETH B. LITTLE

Wayzata, Minnesota

Tennessee Williams

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If Miss Magid rates Tennessee Williams as our "only American playwright since O'Neill" ["The Innocence of Tennessee Williams," January], her comments on the

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others must be unprintable. Since she writes of Williams with only occasionally mitigated contempt and since the others are presumably even worse, theater-going must bring Miss Magid masochistic suffering fit even for a Tennessee Williams heroine. Apparently, only the anticipation of taking revenge in print carries her through.

. . . Surely a critic should approach with humility and gratitude any body of serious and even partially successful artistic work. Trenchant analysis does not require vituperation. . . . Williams, Miss Magid tells us, has a virginal heart. Miss Magid suffers from a malady equally debilitating, namely, undergraduate ferocity. . . .

The central vision of Tennessee Williams is obviously the basic duality of sex and of life itself. It is a common enough concept, however strange the situation and people through which Williams expresses this. Most of his characters find sex and life both compelling and frightening. The sexual relationship is the most intimate and the most promising of all human relationships and, therefore, often the most degrading and most disillusioning. Sometimes Williams shows sex as miraculously healing. Val in *Orpheus Descending* almost succeeds in bringing Lady back from hell through sex and love. But usually Williams shows more interest and compassion for those who fail in sex and life. Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire* tries desperately and is destroyed; Brick in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* has once tried, but has finally retreated from life; and Laura in *The Glass Menagerie* has never had even the strength to begin. Williams endows his defeated ones with a strange beauty, but he also shows us that their surrender is a kind of death. To Miss Magid this is "a child's refusal to accept the fact of sex, that, yes, grownups really do it." Williams knows that grownups do it; but unlike Miss Magid, he also knows that they often do it badly and turn sex and life into a nightmare. Like all artistic visions, this represents only a part of reality; but this incompleteness does not make it contemptible nor does it justify Miss Magid's gamesmanship. . . .

MELVIN SHEFFTZ

Binghamton, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While Marion Magid has addressed herself to the by now tedious subject, the vanishing of American virility, in "The Innocence of Tennessee Williams," she has done so with refreshing wit and insight. She has the kind of outrageously impertinent mind which might even upstage Mary McCarthy. Let's hear more from her.

PRISCILLA GINSBERG

New York City

Cuba & the U. S.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article by Dennis H. Wrong ["After the Cuban Crisis," January] makes one yearn for the days of the forthright imperialists Henry Cabot Lodge and Captain A. T. Mahan. The latter knew what they wanted and never concealed their goals with unctuous adjectives. . . .

At the outset Mr. Wrong accuses "the pro-Castro left" of "an interest in blurring" President Kennedy's position . . . with the contention that the administration is opposed to the social structure of Cuba and its confiscation of American business. A few paragraphs later he writes that "The Bay of Pigs invasion was politically disastrous because it suggested [delicate word] that the United States was not prepared to tolerate any regime in Cuba that was domestically revolutionary, neutralist in foreign policy, and antagonistic to private American business interests." Apparently we are to conclude that this motive disappeared at the time of the missile confrontation.

Mr. Wrong operates from the premise that the Cuban government must be overthrown. He expresses no moral or legal scruples—the methods failed. He has no anxiety over a situation that bordered on nuclear war. What he now proposes is a new effort whereby a dishonest flag of social democracy would be raised of all places in Oriente province. . . .

The saddest aspect of Mr. Wrong's attempt to show the CIA how to do the job is that it will meet with approval in many intellectual circles. Rare indeed have been the protests when President Kennedy in dealing with Cuba violated inter-American treaties, our Neutrality Act and the U.S. Code, and the accepted standards of self-determination, non-intervention, and respect for territorial integrity. . . .

But he has a greater task ahead of him than Cuba; it is all of Latin America. Let him heed the words of the Mexican novelist, Carlos Fuentes, who asks North Americans: "Why do you seem so hysterical, so jealous, so angry when a revolution puts into action the liberated energies of the people, and so indifferent, so calm, so thoughtful when

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these same people are exploited, tyrannized, and debased by a feudal oligarchy? . . . Understand this: Latin America is not going to be your back yard any more. We are going to enter the world."

ELMER O. FEHLHABER
Glouster, Massachusetts

MR. WRONG *writes:*

Mr. Fehlhaber strikes me as being a fairly typical Castro partisan whose letter confirms my original brief characterization of the breed. He is unwilling to believe that the American government makes any distinction between a neighboring regime that expropriates American capital and carries out economic reforms of a state socialist character and one that not only joins the Soviet bloc but invites the Russian to establish missile bases on its territory. The Bay of Pigs invasion *did* "suggest"—and I used the word advisedly—that the American government failed to make such a distinction in Cuba, although it has clearly made it elsewhere in the world and even in Latin America. But the invasion attempt was not backed up by any commitment of American troops, was largely promoted by a single agency within the government, and was based on criminally mistaken assumptions about Castro's popular support and the political appeal of the Miami refugees who participated in it. I notice that since the missiles crisis people like Mr. Fehlhaber have become even more violent in their condemnation of the Bay of Pigs than they were at the time and have created a veritable mythology in order to picture it as the equivalent of the suppression of the Hungarian Revolution by Russian tanks. Such a line conveniently obscures the quite different considerations that moved the Kennedy administration last October. To equate the half-hearted, abortive Bay of Pigs venture with Kennedy's stand at the time of the missiles crisis is clearly absurd, even if one regards, as Mr. Fehlhaber appears to, the installation of Soviet missiles in Cuba as a matter of no concern to the United States. Would he, by the way, expect the Soviet Union simply to look the other way if American missile bases were suddenly installed in Finland?

I *do* think the replacement of the Castro regime by a social democratic government would be in the best interests of the Cuban people. I considered in my article how this might be achieved without any intervention by the CIA and without risking nuclear war. Since the Soviet Union created what Mr. Fehlhaber elliptically refers to as "a situation that bordered on nuclear war," my article expressed the hope that the Russian retreat under American pressure now made it possible for the Cuban people themselves to act against Castro free of any direct involvement in cold war politics. (I was, I'm afraid, much too optimistic in doubting that Cuba could any longer be exploited for domestic political reasons in the United States.) My article was about Cuba and the Cubans, not, as Mr. Fehlhaber chooses to believe, about American foreign policy. If Mr. Fehlhaber thinks that Manuel Ray and his followers are "dishonest" social democrats, how would he characterize the "bourgeois-liberal" flag raised by Castro in Oriente province in 1956? Incidentally, the Carlos Fuentes he cites was quoted last October as having vigorously denounced Castro for selling out the "Latin American revolution" by allowing the Russians to turn Cuba into a satellite. *That* was the point last October, not whether the administration opposed "the social structure of Cuba and its confiscation of American business," and even Mr. Fuentes and other anti-American Left nationalists saw it, though Mr. Fehlhaber appears unable to grasp it.

Clarification

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Permit me a few words in commentary on the exchange between Messrs. Levin and Lynd ["Letters from Readers," January].

As for my Marxism, I would suggest that the real issue is a bit different than Mr. Levin allows. He says "yes." The orthodox arbiters of these matters say "no." I suggest that it is a rather silly and largely irrelevant discussion. Marx was a man who offered some useful insights and ideas, not a man who offered his name as an adjective for oversimplifying and confusing substantive problems. . . . Thinking so much in terms of him usually results in obscuring the central issues.

Hence I agree wholly with Mr. Lynd . . . that the question Mr. Levin is raising behind all the rhetoric about Marxism is extremely perceptive and relevant. But I am somewhat perplexed by two aspects of Mr. Lynd's response. First, I am surprised by the way he oversimplifies my presentation of the abolitionists, and by the way he misses what seems to me the implication of his own argument about the abolitionists. Second, I am somewhat taken aback by the negative

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character of his conception and definition of radicalism.

. . . The real point about radicalism is to create and act upon it in the here and now rather than to invest so much energy and talent in finding its roots in the American past. True, the two are not wholly unrelated, and the study of history is one of the connecting tissues between them; but in this context the fundamental purpose in studying history is to find out where we are, and what dynamic elements define that reality, so that we can then proceed to act intelligently. . . . An emphasis on finding roots is very apt to distract one from the labor of evolving new ideas, and to reinforce the congenital human propensity to take the roots without realizing until too late that they are bait for the trap of the past.

I am inclined to believe, at least on the basis of what he has written, that Mr. Lynd has come close to doing this in connection with the abolitionists. It seems to me that a radical view has to be evolved from the axiom that man is a social being. Yet the abolitionists were not only highly individualistic, but as a group failed in connection with the Negro to carry through—even in their thinking—on the individualism they proclaimed. They were in many respects the moral and ideological shock troops of *laissez-faire* (which is to say, as I have said, much more than that they were simply "individualistic egoists").

The abolitionists did mount slashing attacks on slavery and the three-fifths clause of the Constitution. But they were not the first to do so: other men who entertained a conception of community as a conservative, stratified society assaulted slavery from its inception in the United States. Indeed, those men (including some Southerners) had created the north as a region free of slavery long before the abolitionists came on the scene. I do not see the abolitionists as offering any comparable, but radical, idea and ideal of community *including the Negro*.

If the roots of an American radicalism, therefore, are to be found in the slavery question they are rather more apt to be located in the Negro half of that story. That suggests that the roots of American radicalism may in fact be rather young shoots, a point I implied in the closing sections of *The Contours of American History*. It may be more helpful, then, to look for the roots of an American radicalism within the confines of the 20th century—beginning, say, with William E. B. Du Bois, Eugene Debs, and the Wobblies. For that matter, James Baldwin may be more of a root than any of us history-conscious white folk have yet realized.

WILLIAM APPLEMAN WILLIAMS
University of Wisconsin

Economic Currents

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

May I be allowed a footnote to Professor C. E. Ayres's review of my *Main Currents in Modern Economics* [April]? The fortuitous juxaposition in the book of Veblen and the Austrian marginal utility economists impelled him to suggest that in my view the latter was a response to the Institutionalist critique of received doctrine. This, of course, would be quite wrong and no such idea was intended. In fact, marginalist theory had already become common coin by the time Veblen began to write, and it was he who reacted against the Austrians. But it is true that much of the motivation underlying the latter's brand of economics stemmed from a felt need to rebut Marxism. This was certainly so with Böhm-Bawerk and a number of lesser lights among the marginalists; and the furious debates between Otto Bauer and Joseph Schumpeter during their student days in Vienna testify to the manner in which Marxian theory must have challenged the new traditionalists.

BEN B. SELIGMAN
Washington, D. C.

The Jewish Musician—I

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his article "The Predicament of the Jewish Musician" [February], Albert Goldman is guilty of specious reasoning. His attempt to resurrect Wagner's hoary old fraud *Das Judentum in der Musik,* might better have been entitled "The Predicament of Albert Goldman."

Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer, and Offenbach are singled out for not composing like some of the great masters who preceded them, and Mr. Goldman attributes this to the then recent emancipation of German Jewry and the "fact" that they were not really rooted in German culture. Isn't it possible that these composers wrote to the limits of their genius? Mendelssohn was better in "Midsummer Night's Dream" than in his oratorios because the fantastic elements were more suited to that genre than the oratorio. Even so, "Elijah" is a most impressive work. What other composer of the 19th century is his peer in this medium? If

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Mendelssohn was not as creative or original as Schumann, what about Grieg, who did not labor under the burden of being Jewish, and had the further advantages of being firmly rooted in the fjords of Norway?

Meyerbeer is castigated as an imitator of Italian and French styles and for having worldly ambitions. But music history points up many examples of, say, French and Russian composers (not a Jew in the lot) who imitated Spanish styles.

Rossini and Verdi were true Italians, steeped in the soil and culture of land and church. The former's "Stabat Mater" and the latter's "Requiem" are operatic, worldly, and histrionic, albeit very beautiful. How come these gentlemen did not produce church music with the spiritual profundity of a Palestrina?. . . .

Mahler is compared unfavorably to Hugo Wolf and Bruckner for a variety of reasons, one of the tritest being that he composed in so many different styles and moods. So did Mozart and Beethoven. Hugo Wolf wrote surpassingly masterful songs but found himself limited in the larger forms and so goes down as a minor master. Why anyone would prefer Bruckner to Mahler is beyond me, but . . . Bruckner's Catholicism and Mahler's Jewishness must have something to do with it.

Ernest Bloch is taken to task because his "Sacred Service" is not as powerful as his cello Rhapsody "Schelomo" . . . because, among other reasons, the former was written to a bland text. I fail to see that the *"Sh'ma"* and the *"Kodosh"* for example, are bland, but in this none too subtle barb at Reform Judaism, Mr. Goldman is exercising his prerogative. As for me, "Schelomo" is a colossal bore and the "Sacred Service" is thrilling.

Race, nationality, and environment undoubtedly influence style, mood, and idiom, but none of these factors will influence to one iota the degree and quality of an artist's genius. . . . Attempts to inject the mystique of blood and soil into the question lead only to a tragic blind alley.

SAUL DORFMAN

Chicago Musical College
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Albert Goldman's intelligent but accusing article . . . seems to me an incomplete analysis of the problem faced by the Jewish musician in Western culture.

Mendelssohn wrote at least two major compositions which we have a right to consider serious besides the "Midsummer Night's Dream" music: . . . the "Violin Concerto" and the "Scotch Symphony." I cannot believe, simply because the oratorios are not as great as the religious works of Bach, Handel, or Mozart, that he failed "as a Jew" in music. When I listen to the Concerto, I can hear a tinge of Jewish melancholy, in, for example, the first movement, that . . . convinces me that he has what I would call "human" value, aside from graciousness, clarity, and light. . . .

Mendelssohn's Protestantism interests me very little. His "Scotch Symphony" suggests a cultured Jew emotionally involved with the Scottish landscape but not letting it interfere with his sense of absolute music. This stormy work is one of the finest of Romantic symphonies. . . .

Can we take Wagner's word for it that Jews don't have roots in Western civilization? . . . What about Milhaud? His family has been in France longer than the French. The French assimilate to Milhaud. Does Mr. Goldman consider him unmentionable? Cosmopolitan? Rootless?

I grew up singing Meyerbeer's *"O Paradiso,"* a sweet aria which one rarely hears now. . . . It blended very nicely with my tortured Brooklyn Jewish childhood.

I have heard that Bizet and Saint-Saëns were both Jewish. Both are respectable composers, and Bizet wrote some music that most critics would term "great." French music would have an even lesser claim without these two and Ravel, whom Mr. Goldman hasn't dared to mention.

Bloch's "Schelomo" is a gorgeous piece by any standards. It is true to itself, and the "Concerto Grosso" is a delicious blend of Hebraic and Swiss and international elements, the effect of which is to give a poignant sense of the world that produced him. . . .

Mr. Goldman wants . . . Jews to write a "Jewish" music (something he doesn't really define) . . . [and he points yearningly] to non-Jewish composers who have written passionately and from the heart. . . . [But he] will let us off if we . . . write truly American music. When musicians sign loyalty oaths, that will be the day for Chopin's "Funeral March" to be played in every Jewish home. . . .

STEVE FELDMAN

Brooklyn, New York

(Further correspondence on this article, together with Mr. Goldman's reply, will be published in our next issue.—ED.)

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DOOM AND LOVE

THE PROPHETS. By ABRAHAM J. HESCHEL. *Harper & Row. 518 pp. $6.00.*

Reviewed by DAVID DAICHES

BETWEEN THE 9th and the 6th centuries B.C.E. two little kingdoms in the Middle East struggled desperately to maintain their integrity against the increasing pressure of large and powerful neighboring empires. They both failed. One of them, Israel, was conquered by the Assyrians about 722, its inhabitants deported into exile never to return. The other, Judah, was conquered by the Babylonians in 586, but the inhabitants preserved their identity in exile and after seventy years enough of them and their descendents were able to return to Judah to re-establish a Jewish kingdom there, which maintained a precarious existence until finally overwhelmed by the Romans some six centuries later. These nine disturbed centuries, during which the clash of power politics in the Middle East became ever fiercer, saw religious developments in both Israel and Judah that had profound and permanent effects on the religions of the Western world. The last and most spectacular of these developments was the emergence of the ideas which coalesced into Christianity; these ideas could of course not have emerged without the long earlier history of Judaism, and nothing in the history of Judaism is more remarkable and in a sense more inexplicable than the appearance of the Hebrew Prophets at the time when Israel and Judah were threatened with extinction at the hands of neighboring powers.

The Hebrew Prophets were born into a world of desperate power politics, and their message was, to put it quite simply, that power politics don't matter. The flamboyant wealth and cruel power of Egypt and Assyria, and the enormous impact of their religion on western Asia, were firmly and decisively rejected by the Prophets: salvation lies not in power and wealth but in doing justice and loving mercy, in looking after the widow and the fatherless, in turning to God and doing His will. Nowhere do we hear more clearly the anti-political voice than in the first Isaiah as he prophesied before the kings of Judah during the critical period when that small country was seeking every conceivable expedient to preserve its independence in the midst of the great powers. "Isaiah could not accept politics as a solution," writes Dr. Heschel, "since politics itself, with its arrogance and disregard of justice, was a problem." Again and again Isaiah reveals himself as the protestant against all power politics, trying to keep Judah in the traditional Israelite role of contracting out of the big material civilizations. When King Hezekiah tried to form an alliance with Egypt for protection against Assyria, Isaiah reproved him:

> Turn away from man,
> In whose nostrils is breath,
> For of what account is he?

When the politicians proposed alliances, Isaiah replied:

> In returning [to God] and in rest you shall be saved;
> In quietness and in trust shall be your strength . . .
> The Egyptians are men, and not God;
> And their horses are flesh, and not spirit.

This is one recurring theme of the Hebrew Prophets, a theme repeated again and again in the midst of an increasingly desperate political situation. "Not by might, and not by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord" (Zechariah). Parallel to this theme, and indeed most intimately bound up with it, is the theme of Israel's sinning and need to repent if it is not to meet with appalling national disaster. National disaster is a punishment for sin; timely repentance will

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avert it. Time and again the Prophets thunder their prophecies of doom (destruction by the enemy, enslavement, humiliation, death) only to turn in the end to plead with the people to put righteous behavior above political and military power as the only way of avoiding this fate. "Thus saith the Lord: 'Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories, glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord Who practices kindness, justice, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, says the Lord." The spectacular wealth and exhibitionist use of it found not only in Assyria and Babylonia but also among those kings of Israel and Judah who tried hard to impress their neighbors with their neighbors' kind of civilization left the Prophets totally unimpressed. If you want to escape national extinction and to prosper, then "hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate," exhorted Amos. Amos attacked injustice (which included lack of charity) while Hosea attacked wrong attitudes of mind arising from the lack of inward understanding of the nature of God's love for His people. Isaiah had no doubt of the way to save his country: "Zion shall be redeemed by justice, And those in her who repent, by righteousness." Each of the pre-exilic Prophets had his own particular emphasis, but the burden of their message is the same: destruction by the enemy will come as a result of the people's denial of justice and mercy and righteousness in their daily living; God is angry with His people for their injustice, cruelty, and selfishness, which is a repudiation of their covenant with Him; and He will unleash the enemy on them unless they repent.

This is, of course, an over-simplification; the place of the prophecy of doom varies from Prophet to Prophet and its relation to the prophecy of love is sometimes highly complex (the two always go together, however). The commonest movement is from anger to elegy to comfort:

> I have forsaken My house, I have abandoned My heritage; I have given the beloved of My soul Into the hands of her enemies . . . For the sword of the Lord devours . . . A voice is heard in Ramah, Lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children; . . . Thus says the Lord: Keep your voice from weeping And your eyes from tears; For your work shall be rewarded, says the Lord, And they shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is hope for your future, says the Lord, And your children shall come back to their own country.

This movement, taken here from Jeremiah, is found again and again.

Dr. Heschel expounds all this very well, with numerous illustrations and all the appropriate scholarly references. Nevertheless, while he continually implies that the message of the Prophets is still relevant, he shies away from any confrontation of the historical question, which might be phrased like this: granted that justice and mercy are more important and ethically more desirable than military power and exhibitionist use of private wealth, is it true that a small nation ringed round by large and powerfully military states can preserve itself from conquest by simple trust in God and in virtue? This may seem a very naïve question, but one cannot help thinking of the six million who died in the gas chambers and asking whether this was because they were backsliders and whether trust in the Lord combined with the practice of justice and mercy would have saved Hitler's innumerable victims. Similarly, when Dr. Heschel shows how exile and suffering enlarged the vision of, for example, the second Isaiah and helped to bring about that wonderful prophecy of a world of universal peace and goodness, he does not pursue the point. "Agony is the final test. When all hopes are dashed and all conceit is shattered, man begins to miss what he has long spurned. In darkness, God becomes near and clear." So Dr. Heschel, paraphrasing Isaiah and others. But does this apply to Auschwitz?

Dr. Heschel tries hard to come to terms with the question of suffering as punishment for national sinning (and its corollary, that he who suffers must have sinned), but he never gives a clear answer. "A change in man's conduct brings about a change in God's judgment. No word is God's final word," he explains, interpreting a passage in Isaiah. But this surely implies that if man

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will not turn from his evil ways then he will be made to suffer. The fact that the second Isaiah conceded that the people were made to suffer "double for all [their] sins" hardly clarifies the problem. Captivity is clearly seen as a punishment for bad behavior, and even though the prophets (notably Hosea) express with remarkable eloquence their sense of God's anguish in having to send a message of doom to His beloved people who have cast Him off, the fact remains that we are called upon to judge the historical validity of the Prophets' message as well as its ethical and religious validity. Why do the righteous suffer? Dr. Heschel concedes that this is "the greatest question of all regarding the problem of justice." But for the most part the Prophets seem to be saying that the people will suffer because they are *not* righteous and that if they repent and become righteous they will *not* suffer. Dr. Heschel breaks into vague generalizations at this point in the argument. "This is what the Prophets discovered. *History is a nightmare.*" A nightmare because the righteous suffer, the implication is, for Dr. Heschel brings this statement forward in immediate answer to the problem of the suffering of the righteous. But no; it turns out that what he is saying is that history is a nightmare because "the way man acts is a disgrace, and it must not go on forever." The nightmare, then, is simply the nightmare of man's bad behavior, not the suffering of the righteous, which Dr. Heschel never mentions again.

This is not to deny the power and beauty of much of what the Prophets say. These books of the Bible are indeed tremendous, and any reader must be impressed not only with the high ethical conviction of these men but also with the very special kind of vision which enabled them to speak in the name of God with total conviction and with the bold "anthropopathy" in which they put the case from God's side, showing him yearning and grieving over His lapsed people. Though the God of the Prophets is not anthropomorphic, He *is* anthropopathetic, and Dr. Heschel is at his best in analyzing (though with a good deal of repetition) this unique feature of Hebrew prophecy. The Prophets become most intelligible when we see their view of God as unashamedly and insistently anthropopathetic: God is concerned, angered, saddened, remorseful, even bewildered. There is extraordinary moral power in this presentation, as well as a most moving poetic force. God is seen as both controlling history and as being involved in it, concerned and troubled by it. Man's inhumanity to man "is a humiliation of God," and God intervenes to show His concern or anger at specific moments, not continuously. (I think that Dr. Heschel is a bit inconsistent in dealing with the prophetic view of the nature of God's presence in history; but it is a ticklish subject.) The prophetic view of the "divine pathos" is continued in later popular Jewish theology though not in formal Jewish theology: it is found, for example, in Hasidic tales but not in Maimonides, whose acceptance of the Stoic view of the intrinsic evil of passion made him deny that God could have any feelings or be subject to any kind of emotional change.

DR. HESCHEL is at pains to show that Hebrew prophecy was unique, and is quite distinct from ecstasy, possession, and other states which have led people to "prophesy." The Prophets saw themselves as having experienced a genuine encounter with God, from Whom they received a message which they delivered sometimes with reluctance and sometimes after considerable argument with God to try to make Him change His mind. "In contrast to the apocalyptic visionaries, the pre-exilic prophets are shown the confusions on earth rather than the glories in heaven. Their distinction was to sense the human situation as a divine emergency." To question the genuineness of the Prophets' encounter with God, argues Dr. Heschel, is to question their integrity: after all, that is what they said happened. This is perhaps rather naïve; everything depends on how we define "encounter" and "God." "Two subjects are involved in the act of inspiration: a gift of revelation and a recipient. In order to grasp the essential character of inspiration, significance for both partners must be elucidated." This is the nearest Dr. Heschel comes to saying explicitly what he frequently implies, that he believes literally that the Prophets received a message from a personal, "doing and suffering" God, and that they literally spoke that message on God's behalf. One may appreciate the

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greatness and the uniqueness of the Prophets without committing oneself to this literal belief. Reading their passionate poetic words, so fraught with intense ethical feeling and an absolutely assured sense of the numinous—and they really ought to be read in Hebrew: all translations are pallid beside the original—is a positively shattering experience. One tends too easily to take it all for granted, and I am grateful to Dr. Heschel for sending me back to those disturbing utterances with renewed interest and increased wonder.

CHECKS AND IMBALANCES

THE DEADLOCK OF DEMOCRACY: FOUR PARTY POLITICS IN AMERICA. By JAMES MACGREGOR BURNS. *Prentice-Hall. 388 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by C. VANN WOODWARD

JAMES MACGREGOR BURNS, the genial professor of political science at Williams College, has a deceptively bland way of advancing revolutionary readings of the past and revolutionary proposals for the future. As for the present, the conventional field of operations for political scientists, his estimate of the situation might have been more accurately represented by substituting in the title of this book the word "Breakdown" for "Deadlock." For all his mild-mannered tolerance and all his deference to classical authorities, Mr. Burns has struck a telling blow at both the American political tradition itself and at all the scholarly and public complacency about that tradition.

Mr. Burns devotes half his book to a revision of American political history. Not since Charles Beard published his *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* fifty years ago have the framers of the Constitution had so rough a time. Unlike Beard, Mr. Burns attacks neither the motives nor the methods of the framers, but rather their often celebrated handiwork of checks and balances: elaborate safeguards, countervailing forces, separate constituencies, staggered elections, separated powers, counterbalancing vetoes, overlapping authorities. The fragmentation of power thus produced was further aggravated by the federal system, with its rivalries between state and nation, governors and legislatures, city mayors and state governments. Mr. Burns labels this fragmentation the "Madisonian Model," and he is persuaded that it has long since outlived its usefulness.

In contrast to the Madisonian Model, Mr. Burns describes what he calls the "Jeffersonian Strategy." Relying on a vigorous competitive party under strong presidential leadership, Jefferson overrode congressional prerogatives, by-passed constitutional processes, and avoided the difficult and tedious process of constitutional amendment. While the Constitution discourages Jeffersonianism and strongly favors Madisonianism, Mr. Burns believes that such presidential initiatives as he advocates are nevertheless permitted within its framework.

The strong Presidents who have followed with varying success the Jeffersonian Strategy earn Mr. Burns's praise. He quotes with approval, for instance, Woodrow Wilson's conception of presidential leadership:

> For he is also the political leader of the nation, or has it in his choice to be. The nation as a whole has chosen him, and is conscious that it has no other political spokesman. His is the only national voice in affairs. Let him once win the admiration and confidence of the country, and no other single force can withstand him, no combination of forces will easily overpower him. His position takes the imagination of the country. . . . If he rightly interprets the national thought and boldly insists upon it, he is irresistible; and the country never feels the zest of action so much as when its President is of such insight and calibre.

But Mr. Burns points out that the Presidents who have tried to play this role have been dogged by frustration. They have been hobbled by Madisonian checks and hamstrung by coalition politics. For only nominally is ours a two-party system; in order to govern, these Presidents have been compelled to manipulate multi-party coalitions more complex than those of France before de Gaulle. Ours is in fact a system of four parties, each of which is made up of coalitions. Both the Democrats and Republicans are divided into a presidential party and a

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congressional party, and Pennsylvania Avenue is approximately as long for the Democrats as for the Republicans.

In Mr. Burns's view—and the historian will not accept this without qualifications—the congressional parties have a common ideology. It is generally conservative, isolationist, and intrinsically negative. It is basically Madisonian and rests on states' rights, local elections, rural over-representation, restricted franchise, powerful congressional committees, the seniority system, and the filibuster. Its prophets are Madison and Calhoun and its contemporary spokesmen are James Burnham, William S. White, and David Lawrence. The congressional parties fear "the tyranny of the majority," stress (certain) minority rights, and are rooted in the one-party areas, North and South.

Presidential parties are typically, though not uniformly, majoritarian, activist, and welfare-minded and internationally oriented. They tend to work the two-party states. Their own counterpart of the gerrymandered congressional district is the electoral college. The President flanks Congress with legislative powers, just as Congress flanks the President with executive powers. Congressional committees are countered by presidential commissions. The parties move in and out of coalition; at any time any one of the four might coalesce with any one of the others. A standard device of both presidential parties is to choose the Vice President from one of the congressional parties.

To get any major legislative program off the ground in our Madisonian maze of countervailing and overlapping powers, politicians are compelled to piece together a new patchwork of factions, congressional votes, and temporary coalitions. Presidents do this by endless maneuvering, manipulating, compromising, persuading, and bargaining; and on the other side, congressional leaders use the same methods to hamstring them. Any sort of movement comes only through some painfully achieved consensus, the concurrence of majorities of different sets of voters organized around leaders in "mutually checking and foot-dragging sectors of government."

The result, Mr. Burns believes, is that "we have lost control of our politics." We occasionally choose bold and courageous leaders, but we withhold from them the power to govern. We have lost our sense of purpose, our power to act in the face of crisis; power itself is so fragmented and splintered that it cannot be marshaled for effective use. In the past our geographic isolation and other natural and historical blessings served to provide us with a cushion of time, and the endless stalling and deadlock of the Madisonian Model did not matter so much. But now the cushion of time has all but vanished. The pace of change has become furious, the abyss is always at hand, and we must strain every nerve to hold our own, to say nothing of making headway against the competition we face.

With all the considerable eloquence at his command, Mr. Burns adjures us to abandon our emotional and intellectual commitment to the Madisonian Model. "We cannot unfreeze our politics until we unfreeze our minds." Our minds are still too much under the sway of Hobbesian-Hamiltonian suspicions of the majority as "a great beast." We must learn to trust majority rule and appreciate once more the possibilities of the Jeffersonian Strategy.

WHILE MR. BURNS deprecates "a gimmick approach to political problems," he is nevertheless at pains to spell out his own program of reforms. These include: full national control over the election of national officials; the merging of presidential and congressional parties by encouraging a straight national party ticket; public financing and systematic control of campaign expenses; and the establishment of responsible party leadership in Congress after wiping out the ancient seniority system. He does not on the whole believe in constitutional amendment as a way of reform—"partly because it is so difficult"—and holds that his essential reforms "do not call for constitutional change." He does admit that three amendments, though not essential, "would be extremely helpful and might achieve enough support to pass." These would provide for a four-year term for Representatives, to coincide with presidential terms; repeal of the 22nd Amendment barring a third-term President; and elaborate reforms and changes in the Electoral College. More important than these, however, are the reforms designed to clear away the checks and bal-

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ances that frustrate majoritarian government and presidential leadership. And these he conceives to be possible within the given constitutional framework.

GRANTING without too much argument the desirability of Mr. Burns's reforms, his hope of realizing them peacefully seems to me to require a willing suspension of disbelief. To begin with, Mr. Burns makes use of a "model of his own: "It may be that Kennedy will be the first President to grasp the great possibilities open to a creative party leader." Thus his historical analysis settles concretely into the present with the somewhat blithe assumption that he has found the hero for his peaceful revolution. Yet by Mr. Burns's own admission Mr. Kennedy, although "a policy activist and liberal," is also "an institutional conservative" and "a Madisonian at heart." Certainly thus far the President has shown no eagerness "to take sweeping action, no matter how controversial," and no impulse to embrace "root-and-branch reorganization" such as Mr. Burns demands.

But an even greater strain on credulity is any expectation of peacefully wresting from the powerful lords of Senate and House the institutional buttresses of their power, including the seniority system, the Rules Committee veto, unlimited filibuster, malapportionment of representation, and the one-party districts. The more or less voluntary relinquishment of these institutions would require the greatest wholesale foreswearing of privilege and prerogative since the Tennis Court Oath during the French Revolution. The present personnel and mood of Congress scarcely suggest a Tennis Court situation. Thus conceived, the politics of reform comes near to being the art of the impossible.

TASTE AND SYMPATHY

PUZZLES AND EPIPHANIES. By FRANK KERMODE. *Chilmark Press. 234 pp. $4.95.*

Reviewed by ANGUS WILSON

BACK IN THE early 20's, when I was a small boy on holiday from boarding school, my parents took me to the London Coliseum, the English theater that had made music halls respectable for the middle-class family. My father's purpose was for me to see Harry Tate before that great Edwardian comedian died. My mother, who thought all laughter in public somewhat vulgar, was delighted to find that there would also be a "spectacle" of a more artistic kind. The "spectacle" amazed me for it consisted of a number of ladies creating patterns out of colored lighting on draperies. My father said that it was all cock; my mother announced in tones partly shocked, partly reverent that it was "something to do with Loie Fuller." From what Professor Kermode says of that famous dancer in his first essay in this collected volume, I believe now that I may then have seen the great Loie Fuller herself. I was, later in the 20's and 30's, to see many feeble imitations of this spectacle in reviews and cabarets, but those dances at the Coliseum remained in my memory as the most complete and instant realization (although of course only to the naïve imagination of a ten-year-old boy) of what shape and color could combine to suggest. This, I realized then and have remembered ever since, was the summit of all the imaginary beauty that as a child I tried to create, when I woke in the morning, from chance folds in the curtain or odd patterns cast by shadows on the wall.

My imagination, however, in spite of many richnesses, is very conventionally ordered, and consequently my experience of this rather tawdry music hall act and the experience I received from pure imagist poetry, say Mallarmé, had remained in quite separate categories. It has taken Professor Kermode's exciting essay on Loie Fuller, the dance, and the symbolist movement to bring them together not only historically—this is less remarkable, for Mallarmé's and Valéry's interest in the dance is merely a matter of knowledge and, therefore, of research—but far more importantly, in emotional conviction. I can feel now the click that my categorization of the "second-rate" and the "great" had never allowed me to make. This complete openness to all influences, this willingness to allow coherences to grow without the censorship of educated prejudice is one of the many refreshing aspects of Professor Kermode's thought, which is doing so much to bring life back to the body of English criticism after the necessary but so nearly

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fatal operations of F. R. Leavis and his followers.

This concern with the imperfect or popular sources of art shows Professor Kermode at his best. It has nothing to do with the patronizing sociology masquerading as literary criticism so common today, as misshapen progeny of Orwell's famous essays on Frank Richards and Donald McGill; nor, on the other hand, does it seek to inflate the importance of the source in order to justify attention to it. The balance is well shown in Professor Kermode's essay on William Golding, the only postwar English novelist for whom he unreservedly demands the highest honors. Here he describes the connection between Ballantyne's *Coral Island* and Golding's *Lord of the Flies,* and again between Wells's *Outline of History* and Golding's *The Inheritors,* and yet does so with no sociological excursions, either pretentiously inflated or facetiously patronizing; the essay is a literary critical one, and the popular sources are examined in their literary relationship.

In this way Professor Kermode constantly recalls Edmund Wilson, whose praises he sings in a review of the reprint of *Axel's Castle* which cleverly connects the first essays in this book on the symbolist roots of "modern" literature with the later individual appreciations of what may be called the "post-modern" authors. It is Wilson's greatest glory that no snobbery can ever shame him out of his sympathetic curiosity; does his path lead him to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or to *Jurgen*land, then Mrs. Stowe or Mr. Cabell will receive his full attention as though no word of contempt or dismissal had ever been uttered about them. Professor Kermode, I'm afraid, is not as free from the right opinion as this. He has, after all, ascended the modern academic ladder; one would not expect him nor even wish him to be as impervious to all the past New Criticism climate as Wilson in his splendid Johnsonian arrogance can afford to be. Professor Kermode, perhaps in consequence, does not quite achieve the easy lucidity of Wilson's language; he is touched here and there by the sort of metaphysical-psychological jargon that has for so long reigned supreme in American criticism (though not enough to satisfy William Phillips, who, in his introduction, draws attention to the price of excessive fluency); he is also not always without that gnarled, sour note that is required to show moral health in English criticism since Dr. Leavis's *The Great Tradition.* Nevertheless Professor Kermode has most of the Wilsonian freedom from contemporary cant, and a good deal of the cunning sweetness which generally disappeared with Bloomsbury (the essay on Leonard Woolf is a masterpiece of detached affection, that on E.M. Forster a masterpiece of critical love).

AT A TIME when the labels "provincial," "academic," and "working-class" are worn in English intellectual circles either singly or combined as a sort of boy scout proficiency badge, Frank Kermode declares his allegiance to all three states without suggesting for a moment that they are enough in themselves to justify. Yet if this seems to say that he gives any allegiance to the sort of slipshod bellelettrism that has brought shame in England upon the words "metropolitan," "civilized," and "Sunday newspaper," the reader has only to look up the files of *The Spectator* to see the violent trouncing he gave to John Raymond's collected pieces—a trouncing which included a footnote dismissal of Raymond Mortimer's lifework more deadly than most *Scrutiny* footnotes. If it be old-fashioned of Professor Kermode not to have included this violent trouncing in *Puzzles and Epiphanies,* then I must say that I like his refusal of a mode that mistakes cruelty for solid principles. He is, in fact, seldom cruel, though often (as in his pieces on Beckett, Salinger, and Henry Miller) most effectively severe. He has no mercy on those he suspects of misusing or fooling with their creative gifts, for if he seems to care less than many modern critics for the moral integrity of the great writers, he has an old-fashioned stern concern for aesthetic rectitude (he says in an essay on my novels that I give the word "common" a new smartness; I must retort that he does something of the same sort for the concept of "aesthetic"). Thus Salinger, he tells us, is not like Joyce, who rightly "did not seek his readers in the walks of the bestia trionfante," nor like Forster, who rightly "stood by his aristocracy"; "since few men will write for nobody, this fine artist [Salinger] writes for the sharp-common reader." What

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may well be argued, however, is that Professor Kermode is not always severe when he should be and not always severe soon enough.

THESE DEFECTS are in part an inevitable result of the relativism which otherwise makes him so much more rewarding an appreciator than the contemporary Calvinistic Cerberuses whose growls warn us away from so many aesthetically rich if morally fallen angels of literature; but the defects are also in some part a result of the changes of opinion, the over-quick appreciation demanded by weekly journalism. It is the gravest defect of *Puzzles and Epiphanies* that Professor Kermode (out of a mistaken sincerity?) has left so much evidence of these journalistic vagaries. It is reasonable that his pride should persuade him to include three essays on *Dr. Zhivago,* the first of which shows that his instant reactions at the time of the English publication demanded less revision than most of Pasternak's crush of admirers. Yet a merging of the three papers in one matured consideration would have been more satisfactory. More justifiable is the inclusion of three pieces on Lawrence Durrell which show a distaste of *Justine* changing to an admiration for *Mountolive* and a disappointment at *Clea;* but even here these changes are an ordinary enough pattern to have been reordered in a new appreciation. More damaging perhaps to the tone of the book as a whole is the retention of review pieces that were sparked off (as any good journalistic essay will be) by strong reactions only relevant to the moment. Thus to have offset Beckett's defects by Snow's pedestrian virtues may have seemed at that moment an effective juxtaposition; now, however, the praise of Snow seems out of all proportion to his slender merits and unsupported by anything else in Professor Kermode's essays. Indeed another piece assessing the value of the postwar English novel is directly sparked off by hostility to the high claims made by Pamela Hansford Johnson (Lady Snow) on behalf of her husband's work; the reaction is understandable but it gives the assessment too temporary a feeling.

Perhaps these opposite reactions to Snow are only part of the defect arising from Professor Kermode's general, otherwise welcome, relativism. His general view of 20th century literature is based on his study of Mallarmé as the foundation of "modern" literature. On the whole his allegiance remains with this world of Valéry and Eliot, yet many of its consequences—Henry Miller, for example, and even at times Joyce—irk and repel him. He is attracted by neo-traditionalists like Graham Hough, or critics of Eliot like Yvor Winters. Yet the purely social surface of much neo-traditional novel writing seems to him an inadequate response to the great "moderns"—Joyce or Proust (this is apparent in his mixed response to Anthony Powell and to Christopher Isherwood). A figure like C. P. Snow, therefore, seen against Miller or Beckett seems to him respectable, yet seen against the giants, Joyce or Pasternak (both of whom Snow has treated dismissively), Snow's return to tradition seems contemptible. This basic contest in postwar literature Professor Kermode, in fact, prefers to evade, because although he recognizes its force, he cannot see any seriousness in its actual waging. For this reason his best essays are those on Loie Fuller, Valéry, and all that was "modern" before anyone began to question Eliot, or again in his wonderful appreciations of Waugh, Graham Greene, and William Golding—novelists who are neither experimental in the old "modern" sense of the word nor sociological in the neo-traditional Snow sense, novelists who would still be what they are if neither Joyce nor Snow had existed. For the rest, for all that concerns the dominance of myth in modern literature and its supposed postwar decline, he is always exciting to read, but sometimes a little irritating in his refusal to step beyond sympathetic identification with protagonists of each side into some declared personal judgment.

THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD

THE URBAN VILLAGERS. By HERBERT J. GANS. *Free Press. 367 pp. $7.00.*

Reviewed by MICHAEL PARENTI

IN THESE times of suburban growth and urban planing, it is worth being reminded that cities, besides being centers of com-

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merce and culture, are places where people like to live. And in this day of mass society it is refreshing to think of cities as places that still harbor real neighborhoods where individuals know each other, have face-to-face relations, and feel a comfortable attachment to their surroundings. In his *The Urban Villagers,* Herbert Gans—a city planner as well as a sociologist—presents us with one such neighborhood, the West End of Boston, or more precisely, the Italian-American community of that area. This book, pursuing Mr. Gans's two special interests, is both a study of an ethnic community and a critique of the West End urban renewal program. In fact, the "West End" no longer exists, having been demolished to make way for a high-rent housing development. How the community lived and how it met its death are the objects of the author's investigation.

The Urban Villagers, in subject matter and method, invites comparison with William F. Whyte's *Street Corner Society,* an earlier work on the second-generation Italians of Boston's North End. Like Whyte, Mr. Gans lived in the area for a long time and immersed himself in the complexities and daily concerns of its community. As a result, he has been able, with a judicious use of direct quotations and personal impressions, to give us something of the real human flavor of West End life. But unlike Whyte, Mr. Gans has not been content with merely describing what he saw and heard: he has also integrated and structured his vast collection of data into a well-ordered and useful community study.

Mr. Gans's discussion of the West-Ender's life is a departure from the standard literature on American ethnic experience. From Oscar Handlin on down, it has been customary to stress the extraordinary and bewildering transformation that peoples undergo in migrating from the old world to the new. Mr. Gans suggests that the great sea-change was not as drastic as it has come to seem. Moving from rural towns in the old country to "urban villages" in the new, the immigrants were in fact able to retain much of their former social system—because the position they occupied in the American social structure was so very similar to the one they had occupied in Italian society. In both countries, the available work was unskilled and poorly paid; the authorities served, or were seen as serving, interests other than those of the people; education, by keeping children from work, was a financial burden rather than an avenue of opportunity; and the extended family had to function as the matrix of social life. To be sure, the second-generation West-Ender is interested in American cars, dress, and sports, and the popular mass media, and displays little concern for Italian culture other than its cuisine; that is to say, he appears at first glance to be acculturated to the American world. Nevertheless, his traditional family and peer-group structure, and the concomitant attitudes toward them, still persist in somewhat modified form.

Mr. Gans's picture of second-generation Italian-American working-class life centers on what contemporary sociologists call the "peer group," in which the bonds of friendship and identification are shared throughout most of life by people of the same age and sex. At an early age, the West-End child begins to transfer his time from his family to his group of friends on the street and at school. By the time he reaches adolescence, his street-corner clique—segregated by sex—is fully formed and remains intact until it is time for marriage. After perhaps a brief interlude, married people re-enter peer-group life, relatives now playing a more important role. One's "gang" in marriage will now likely consist of siblings, in-laws, cousins, and a number of close friends of the same age and sex.

"Acculturation" in this case does not mean the same thing as "assimilation." If anything, the second generation West-Ender remains as distrustful as his parents of much of the outside world, cynical about the motives of community leaders—including those who emerge from his own ranks—and resistant toward such representatives of the middle class as social workers, city officials, librarians, and teachers, who try to regulate his behavior in accordance with their own standards. His peer-group society reinforces the West-Ender's defenses, and further, staunchly opposes any deviations from its own values. Thus the youngster who adopts the behavior patterns demanded of him by settlement house workers runs the risk of losing his gang's support; or the man who

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shows a preference for serious television dramas over prize fights will incur the ridicule of his friends and be obliged to abide by their tastes.

Work in the West End is a necessary evil, not a deeply satisfying life experience. Nor is marriage considered a source of companionship. For the West-Ender it is in the life of friendship that his energies and feelings seem to find their most important expression. The goal of his life, according to Mr. Gans, is the routinized gatherings of the group itself. Here, over refreshments, he can enjoy accounts of his friends' activities, discuss special events like weddings and holidays, reminisce about the good old days, hear reports and make judgments of other people's behavior. To be left without close and constant companions is the dread scourge of the West-Ender's life, the author tells us; without his group he is often but half a person. Teen-agers, for instance, who are outgoing and aggressive when they are together, are found to be quiet and almost docile when confronted individually.

Generally the West-Ender has little predilection for long-range planning and achievement. A man who puts money aside for some future personal use at the expense of properly entertaining his friends is looked upon with disapproval. Career, wealth, prestige, individual development—such as planning for the careers of one's children—and extended contacts with the outside world can be pursued only if one is prepared to break totally with his immediate society. The price of membership in the group is, according to Mr. Gans, a conformity more thoroughgoing than any found in suburbia.

Frequently, as Mr. Gans observes with insight and sympathy, the West-Ender's defensiveness against the encroachments of the outside world has its good cause. Too often he is accused by those representatives of the middle class with whom he comes in contact of being apathetic or obstinate when in fact he is only displaying his preference for, and deep dependence on, peer-group life. Other times he is accused of "lacking initiative" when all he really suffers from is a perfectly realistic awareness of his severely limited economic opportunities. And on occasion he is charged with "hostility" when he is merely expressing natural resentment against being patronized. In this book the "muted lower level" of society is given the chance to talk back, allowing us to see how far our own perceptions of working-class life are clouded by preconceived stereotypes, middle-class presumptions, and ordinary ignorance.

IN A SENSE, the West-Ender's defensiveness was confirmed by what happened to his neighborhood. For when the West End was declared a slum and razed, a whole social system was destroyed and scattered to the winds—a community which had been "by and large, a good place to live." Mr. Gans argues, most persuasively, that the West End was *not* a slum. The area had little crime, drug addiction, or dereliction, although outsiders and newspapers were convinced that it did. The buildings were old but most of them were in good condition, and the homes were clean and well-kept. And the West End, by providing a stabilized community for newcomers from different parts of the world and for people with low incomes, fulfilled "an important but unrecognized function in the city." Indeed, as the author points out, the very criteria for determining a "slum" that are to be found in federal law, often express superfluous and quite inappropriate middle-class notions.

No one involved in the redevelopment program seems to have given much thought to its human cost; decisions were based on the developer's anticipations of profit rather than on what the tenant might need. Nor did the belated shock, anger, and dismay of the West-Enders do much to alter the situation. (Ironically, there is some question as to whether the redeveloper's shortsighted anticipations will ever materialize. No one as yet knows whether there will be enough tenants for 2400 luxury units, whether commercial interests will gain or lose business, or whether the city actually will enjoy increased tax revenues.)

Both laymen and social scientists engaged in pinpointing peculiar ethnic qualities of one minority group or another, would do well to give serious attention to Mr. Gans's assertion that most of what is considered "ethnic" can better be ascribed to "class." He supports this view with studies of various other working-class groups, which demon-

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strate how many of the West-End Italian's life patterns can be found in working-class sub-cultures that cut across ethnic lines. On the other hand, I think, Mr. Gans pushes the discussion of his point much too far into "either-or" terms, i.e., peer-group society is either an ethnic or a class phenomenon. The West-Ender's feelings of distrust, inferiority, and defensive pride may be as much attributable to his being an Italian, a member of a lower status nationality group, as to his being a member of the lower economic class. Minority group sensibilities and working-class resentments need not be mutually exclusive; rather they are tensions that reinforce each other.

One can also question some of Mr. Gans's more speculative observations, especially those in the realm of social psychology. For instance, the suggestion that the West-Ender is particularly lacking in a self-image to which he might relate, or that this deficiency explains his fear of being alone, "for confrontations of the self are perplexing in the absence of a self-image," is supported by evidence which is, at best, highly inferential. And certain ambiguities—as when Mr. Gans tells us that West-Enders are not "troubled by fears about the breakdown of self-control" and then, later on, observes that they are "preoccupied with self-control"—could have been avoided by more carefully qualified definitions. However, given the intractable nature of his subject matter—a whole community of people impelled by a wide variety of psychological, cultural, and social forces—it is to the author's very great credit that such weaknesses are few.

POST-WITTGENSTEIN DILEMMAS

REASON AND CONDUCT: NEW BEARINGS IN MORAL PHILOSOPHY. By HENRY DAVID AIKEN. *Knopf. 375 pp. $6.75.*

Reviewed by RICHARD J. BERNSTEIN

ANGLO-AMERICAN philosophers in the 20th century—despite the fact that to many people outside the field of philosophy their work has seemed to center on preoccupations very far away from what could be traditionally recognized as genuine moral problems—have invested an enormous amount of their energy and intelligence in the field called "ethics." Those working inside analytic philosophy, furthermore, are quite willing to assert that its "hard and sober thinking" has "quietly made our age one of the few periods of genuine creative advance in philosophy."

This collection of essays, written by Henry David Aiken over the past fifteen years, provides a unique opportunity to assess that claim. For not only does Mr. Aiken survey —with wit, grace, and charm—the application of analytic methods to the various domains of human experience; he also lets us in on the genuine confusions and perplexities that beset an analytic philosopher in the field of ethics. For the most part it is the voice of gentle reason that speaks throughout these essays, attempting to bring a bit more clarity and understanding to the complex problems of our age. Mr. Aiken's temperament and style reflect the influence of his two acknowledged mentors, Hume and Santayana, for Mr. Aiken deplores extremist thinking of any type, whether it be that of existentialism or the dogmatic liberalism of Karl Popper. If he had been less honest and less open about his intellectually uncomfortable situation, he might have written a narrower and "better" defense of philosophical analysis—but, paradoxically, a far less interesting book.

What, anyway, is the analytic ethics that Mr. Aiken seeks to defend? How does it differ from more traditional concerns of moral philosophy? The answer is that the philosophical analyst is not primarily interested in telling anyone what he ought to do, or what ought to be the goals, standards, and ideals of his life. He makes a distinction between "substantive" ethics, problems of deliberation and choice, and "analytic" ethics, problems of meaning and logic. He asks: "What are the meanings and uses of 'ought,' 'right,' and 'value'; what are the roles of moral reasoning; what is the nature of moral disagreement and of moral justification; what is the relation of factual statements to moral judgments?" And he charges traditional moral philosophers with having confused these two types of ethics. (Not that the two are unrelated: presumably once we have sorted out the meanings and uses of our moral terms, our individual choices and

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deliberations will become better informed.)

Nevertheless, Mr. Aiken himself, though extremely critical of this confusion in others, slides over and over again from the analytic into the substantive. For example, in discussing "The Practical Relevance of Analytic Ethics," a relevance he desperately wants to affirm, Mr. Aiken says:

> Possibly the greatest practical insight which the study of moral philosophy can impart is understanding of the fact, which Kant long ago expressed in another form, that there is no way of "deriving" moral principles from anything beyond the consciences of men, and hence that there is no way whatever of guaranteeing the validity of any moral code by trying to "ground" it in science, or the nature of the universe—or in the will of God. . . . The masks of conscience are many; the important thing is to understand them for what they are. Maturity comes when we finally realize that, however we may disguise the fact by the symbols by means of which we conduct our communal affairs, everything in this domain is finally "up to us."

Under the guise of establishing the results of analytic ethics, Mr. Aiken has smuggled into this concise and eloquent passage some very substantive conclusions from his own moral position. I say smuggled, because if analytic ethics is concerned with the description of the meaning and uses of words as well as of the rules which are employed by a given community, it can never logically generate a principle like the ultimacy of conscience. Mr. Aiken is telling us that even if we did speak and act in such a way as to make it appear that our moral code was grounded in something other than ourselves, such as the will of God, this discourse would only disguise the *fact* that everything in this domain is finally "up to us."

It is important to remember that Mr. Aiken's style of thought, like so much philosophical writing today, is polemical, and if we are to understand him properly we must take into account what he is fighting against. It is G. E. Moore who stands both as the hero and villain of analytic ethics. Moore (or at least the over-simplified interpretation of Moore that came to prevail) argued that all attempts to define "good" were doomed to failure; "good," he insists, doesn't designate or mean any natural property, but rather designates a simple, unanalyzable "non-natural" quality that cannot be known by empirical methods of observation, but only by a direct awareness or intuition. Now, early positivists and "emotivists" were content to accept Moore's critique of naturalism, but they had little sympathy with his notion of simple non-empirical and non-natural qualities. They contended that, strictly speaking, moral terms are meaningless or at best have a quasi-meaning, sometimes called emotive meaning; the paradigms for truly meaningful sentences are those that describe facts. In these disputes the philosophers were reflecting, in part shaping, one of the major dogmas, and causes for anxiety, in our times. This is the dogma that the only really important function of discourse is to report and communicate information; science, which does describe, explain, and predict facts is really the only legitimate cognitive discipline. All other forms of discourse can only be justified to the extent that they can be translated into scientific or descriptive language.

The inheritors of the analytic tradition, mainly under the influence of the later Wittgenstein, came to realize that they had been victims of their own myth—which was itself, after all, based on an unstated underlying value commitment. There are many uses of language; there are even many varieties of what the analysts would call descriptive language. Languages are forms of life, and they are as complex and varied as the human spirit itself.

The post-Wittgenstein discussion has been conducted in a new spirit of excitement. Aiken himself, whose earliest essays are attacks on the artificial limitations of descriptivism and reductionism in all their pernicious forms, suggests that we are about to enter "the philosophical promised land." Reason, he says over and over throughout this volume, "is not the sole prerogative of the scientists and the logicians." Morality, aesthetics, religion can be appreciated as different symbolic forms or languages. The task of the analytic philosopher is now viewed as that of subtly laying bare the

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structure of these different expressions of the human spirit without forcing them to take on an alien appearance or judging them by irrelevant standards.

Although philosophers have thus been liberated from the confining myth of descriptivism, there is a danger that the new sensitivity to the complexities of different "languages" can entangle us in yet another myth: the idea that buried in ordinary language lies an impersonal structure of moral justification. Mr. Aiken swings back and forth between cultivating this myth and exposing it. Early in the book he tells us that "each time we apply moral rules we are . . . invoking an impersonal linguistic ritual which serves to keep practical deliberation and disagreement within certain socially acceptable bounds." But uneasy with the notion of men being born into straitjackets of impersonal social rules, he insists at another point that the authority of moral rules is constantly dependent upon what I, as an agent, elect to be or do. This conflict in Mr. Aiken has become more intense with the passage of time. Despite his harsh words about the excesses of existentialism, his own analysis of ultimate or limiting questions of justification has most recently come, as he admits, remarkably close to what the existentialists have been saying.

Analysts typically distinguish levels or types of justification. We justify a specific moral action by appealing to a moral rule, but at times we question the legitimacy of moral rules and practices and seek to justify or criticize them by appealing to higher ethical principles and ideals. But, then, can we justify these principles and ideals? Can we ever finally answer the question "Why should I be moral?" Analysts have tended to say that to ask for such ultimate justification is to exceed the bounds of linguistic propriety; there are limits to justification and to try to exceed these limits is to mistake the function of moral and ethical discourse. Now, such a notion may work perfectly well in relation to the great common law tradition of Anglo-Saxon thought. Its severe limitations, however, have become painfully obvious to anyone who must live in the 20th century. As long as a community does acknowledge common moral rules and ethical principles, an approach that concentrates on elucidating the discourse in which these rules and principles are expressed is extremely attractive. But what are men to do when the very framework of morality is questioned? We live in a time when this question can no longer constitute the idle speculation of closeted philosophers. It is no less than our most poignantly practical problem.

Mr. Aiken sees through the dodge of some of his fellow analysts who try to cut off questions of justification in this way. He tells us that a man would be an ass if he said, "I'm sorry, dear fellow, your question doesn't make sense. Your question simply commits a fault against usage. One *cannot* ask what the good of morality is, because it is only in relation to the rules of morality itself that you can even ask such a question." There does come a time when it is impossible to appeal to common ethical principles and ideals, or to accepted types of good reasons. And when such a time comes, nothing can move me unless I *choose* to be bound by it. As Mr. Aiken puts it, "Decision is king." This acknowledgment of the ultimacy of individual decision is one of the most curious ironies in recent analytic

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ethics. Although in temper, emphasis and concern, it has been radically different from existentialism and there has been practically no communication between these two approaches, they end in basic agreement.

THERE are dangers in such an extreme individualism—dangers which Mr. Aiken clearly sees in existentialism, but apparently fails to take account of in his own position. When, for example, he attacks Mill's utilitarian defense of liberty as being doomed to failure, he insists that liberty is so great a good that it ought not to be jeopardized by such a precarious defense. The principle that every person has a right to be at liberty requires justification by no other principle. "What authenticates it is merely our own conscientious avowal of it." But can such "conscientious avowal" be enough? Mr. Aiken would say that there is nothing else that we can depend upon. But if this is so, then we must face the fact that the fanatic and the morally blind can, and in our times have, used the same type of "justification." So, too, in a long critical discussion of moral objectivity and truth, Mr. Aiken concludes with: "To say, then, that a moral statement is true is simply: (a) to reaffirm it and (b) to avow that it meets whatever tests of objectivity are deemed proper by the moral judge himself." Regardless of Mr. Aiken's intentions, such a formula if taken literally is surely a license for radical subjectivity and moral perversity.

In fairness to Mr. Aiken, it must be said that when he speaks in this extremely individualistic vein, he typically appeals to what we can and will do "in conscience." I suspect that this is the reason why he informs us in the preface that the perceptive reader will find the point of view of the recent papers rather more "protestant" and "libertarian" than that of the earlier ones. Many of the difficulties that we have been describing come into sharp focus in Mr. Aiken's appeal to conscience: whenever he gets down to basic issues, too little is said about what conscience is and what can be done "in conscience." Thus in the end he fails to provide a viable intellectual defense against the very extremist positions he abhors; and what is worse, his own views come dangerously close to sliding into the same extremist positions—whether they be the views of the new defenders of Natural Law who argue that it is precisely through conscience that Natural Law is manifested, or the views of radical subjectivists and existentialists, who maintain that there is nothing more to conscience than authentic, albeit absurd, choice. Contrary to his announced expectation of entering a new philosophical promised land, Mr. Aiken's excursions into analytic ethics plunge us back directly into all the same perplexities that have troubled the great traditional moral philosophers.

CRUSADING WITH EISENHOWER

THE ORDEAL OF POWER. By EMMET J. HUGHES. *Atheneum. 372 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by JASON EPSTEIN

THIS LITTLE BOOK is of no interest for what it says about Eisenhower and his administration or for what it adds to the common knowledge of recent American politics. Its generalizations are perfunctory; its gossip trivial and predictable. But as an exercise of a different sort, *The Ordeal of Power* is somewhat special, for while it tells us nothing new, it presents a self-portrait of more than passing interest.

The chief character in this book is its author, formerly a writer for *Time* and *Life* who describes himself as a Democrat by temper but who turns out to have been a Republican by profession; first as a speech writer for Eisenhower, later as adviser to Nelson Rockefeller, but now, not surprisingly, a writer for *Newsweek,* where his political preferences will, presumably, reveal themselves as the occasion demands. Despite his Democratic temper, he agreed to write speeches for Eisenhower in 1952 because, as he says, the Democrats had gone stale in power, the Republicans were restive in opposition, and it was clearly time to drain the swamps where McCarthy and other primitive (but not necessarily Democratic) specimens flourished. Of course the tactic failed. Under Eisenhower, McCarthy got worse and the country had to wait for bourbon and television to work where principle and patience failed. Knowland and Mundt became more obstructive than ever, and the cold war, under Dulles, be-

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came something like an end in itself. The Cabinet, Hughes informs us, was terrible, and Eisenhower himself did nothing on principle. Facing a crisis or even the daily business of the presidency, he behaved, to judge by Hughes's description, like an anarchist deeply mistrustful of government or like a Marxist saint for whom the state had long since withered away. Thus the process of government on its highest level became purely and dully ceremonial. And this is all that Hughes, who had a chance to observe Eisenhower's first four years at close range, has to tell us. As if we didn't know.

Nevertheless, when Eisenhower said to Hughes in 1956 that "he might be calling for 'a little help and advice' in the campaign ahead," Hughes, "with deep but silent reservations," agreed. Hughes's reasons for this decision—which seems on the face of it to have been an act of self-betrayal—are fairly complicated and a little disingenuous. They may be found on page 171 for those who are interested, but they hardly disguise the fact that Hughes was boyishly and innocently glamorized by the White House no matter how idiotic he may have found Charles Wilson, or how feckless he thought George Humphrey was, or how pompous and shifty he considered Dulles. A more vigorous character with a surer sense of himself would probably have said, "To hell with it. I've had enough." Such a person would perhaps even have written his *Ordeal of Power* then, in 1956, when it might conceivably have made a difference. But if Hughes's conscience troubled him in 1956, it couldn't have troubled him much. He slipped its traces as easily as an advertising man moving from Ipana to Crest; in fact more easily than that, because in this case the package, though it was more or less empty, was absolutely certain to sell.

Of course, it made no difference. The country seems to have survived the second four years as it survived the first, and Eisenhower's main contribution to American politics may turn out to have been his demonstration that the country really doesn't need a President at all; that in some sense the nation really has withered away, leaving us all to deal with the local police and the federal bureaucracy as well as we can. If there had been a point for Hughes to make in this book, this might have been it. But he refuses to make it or is incapable, despite his own testimony, of seeing it. When Eisenhower is being clearly dilatory on the question of civil rights, saying that "it is just not good business" to commit himself, Hughes describes this behavior as "impassive and imperturbable," and, oddly, attributes to it a spirit of stoic determination. On the questions of foreign trade and the reorganization of the Defense Department, which, according to Hughes, concerned the President greatly, Eisenhower commented, "My personal convictions, no matter how strong, cannot be the final answer." So nothing happened. It is as if Lincoln, having issued The Emancipation Proclamation, had said, "Here's my plan, but let it go."

Eisenhower's inadequacy as a man of action is self-evident. There is no need to dwell on it. What is to the point is Emmet Hughes's attempt to write a book without a hero; in fact without a subject. The result, predictably, is not really a book at all, but pages of intonation and padding. Because Hughes has nothing to say in this book, and because he refuses to face the real meaning of his participation in the pseudo-government of 1952–60, he relies instead on

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his widely-acclaimed prose style. For page after page, he shamelessly writes and writes:

> In a realistic sense, the high drama of Election Night is always contrived; the great national act of decision is over before the witnessed drama begins, the polls (almost everywhere) have closed, the levers have been pulled, the verdict written beyond recall. All that is left is an exercise in arithmetic. Yet none of this dulls the tension of the long, slow process of piecing together all the fragments of the decision, scattered from ocean to ocean—on Texas plains and along Oregon shores, in the hills of West Virginia and the valleys of Southern California, along the flat, blank-looking plains of the wheatlands, and in the jagged, congested canyons of the great cities. . . .

This sort of organ music goes on and on—leaving one, at last, with the feeling, alternately sickening and exhilarating, that not only had the federal government vanished in those years but so had the nation itself; that we were simply here on the land, like first settlers, in a wilderness without a name or a plan or even a sensible language. Insofar as *The Ordeal of Power* transmits this atmosphere, it reminds us of how it is when language and character collapse at the very center of a country, when public men and their speech writers have neither the sense of action nor the capacity for thought. A nation is, among other things, and perhaps essentially, an intellectual proposition. Otherwise it is just a piece of land, a true wilderness with neither heart nor mind. This is how the country seemed, much of the time, under Eisenhower, and Emmet Hughes's own inadequacies of heart and mind suggest how it came to be that way.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

DAVID DAICHES, the Scottish-born literary critic, is at present teaching in the School of English and American Studies at the University of Sussex.

C. VANN WOODWARD, professor of history at Yale, last appeared in our November 1958 number with his article, "The South and the Law of the Land."

ANGUS WILSON is a distinguished British novelist and literary critic.

MICHAEL PARENTI, a new contributor, teaches political science at the State University of New York.

RICHARD J. BERNSTEIN teaches philosophy at Yale. He reviewed Stuart Hampshire's "Thought and Action" in our March 1961 number.

JASON EPSTEIN is vice-president of Random House. His article, "Books for American Children," appeared in our February issue.

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